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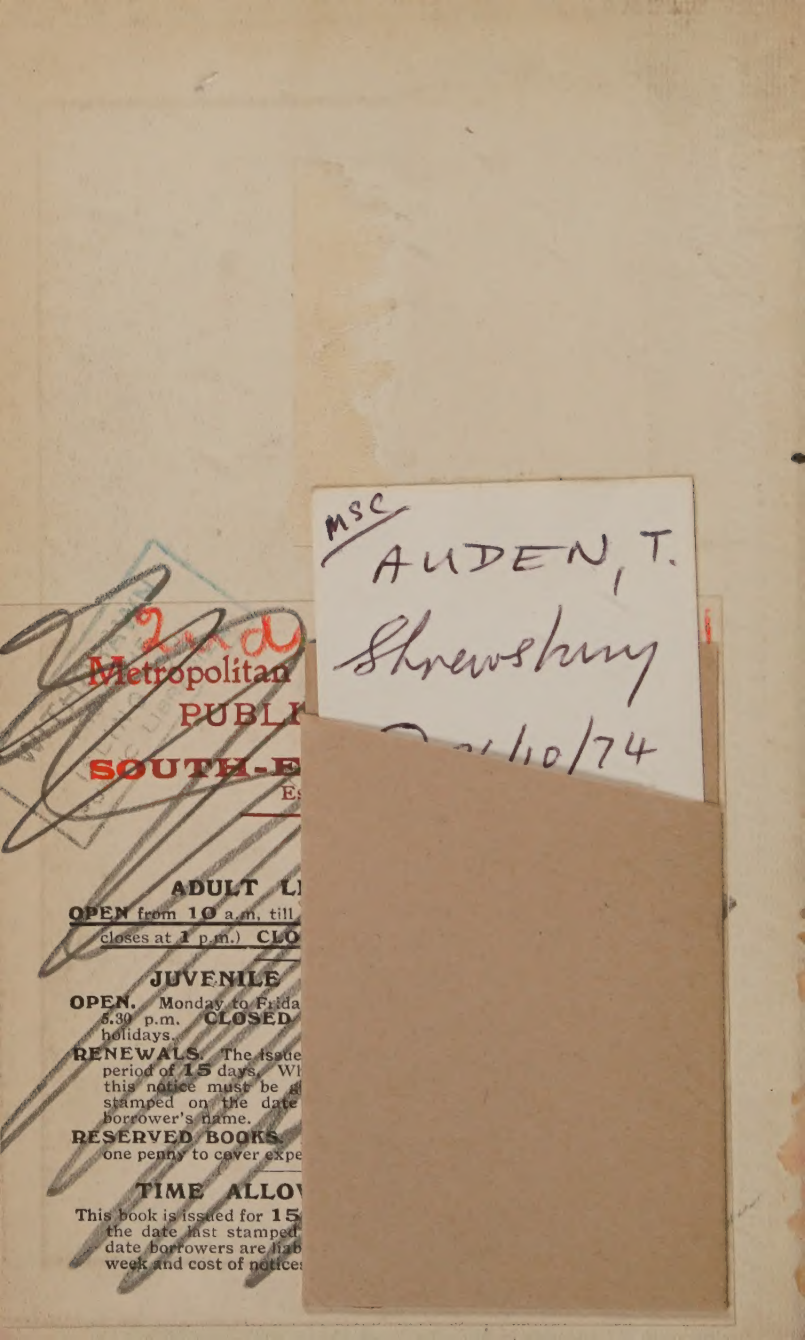
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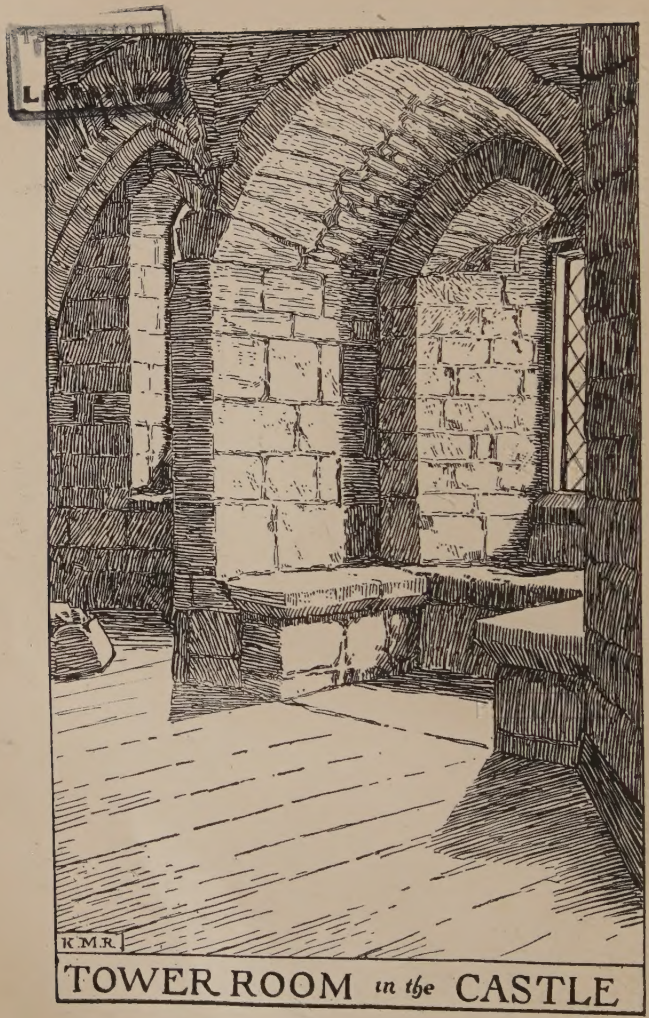
SHREWSBURY

A HISTORICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF THE TOWN



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SHREWSBURY

A HISTORICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF THE TOWN

WRITTEN BY
THOMAS AUDEN
ILLUSTRATED BY
KATHARINE M. ROBERTS

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PREFACE

In writing the following work I have endeavoured constantly to keep in view three objects. The first is the idea of the series to which the volume belongs. That idea is to link closely together historical incident and historical memorial; to connect the story of the past with the relics which still remain, the Itinerary at the end showing how the historical relics mentioned may be most readily found. My second endeavour has been to write a readable book, to produce a volume not unduly technical, which may be acceptable to the average reader of intelligence, who, knowing something, wishes to know more about an interesting place; while my third has been to put down nothing as history that may not be relied upon as accurate. It is too much to hope that I have entirely succeeded in this — too much to hope that, in the multitude of incidents alluded to, and dates quoted, no error has crept in;

but at least I have honestly tried to verify every statement made by consulting the best authorities within my reach. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to specify all these authorities. It goes without saying that the standard work of Owen and Blakeway has always been at my elbow, and in notes to various chapters will be found references to other works on special periods; but beyond these I am largely indebted to papers in the *Transactions* of the Shropshire Archæological Society (of the Council of which I have the honour to be Chairman), and documents preserved in the archives of the town, as well as to multitudinous odds and ends preserved in newspaper cuttings, or otherwise picked up in the course of a long association with the neighbourhood. I have especially endeavoured to bring out the characteristics of Shrewsbury in the eighteenth century—a period with strong traits of its own, both good and bad, which are now by degrees beginning to be understood and appreciated as they deserve. It only remains that I should express my thanks to numerous friends who, in different ways and varying degrees, have lent me their assistance; especially

to my neighbour and quondam parishioner, Mr. Thomas Roberts, who has done me the great kindness of compiling the Index, and to his daughter, Miss K. M. Roberts, who has entered with enthusiasm into all my ideas, and by her illustrations has added largely to whatever worthiness the volume possesses in its completed form.

T. A.

Condover Vicarage
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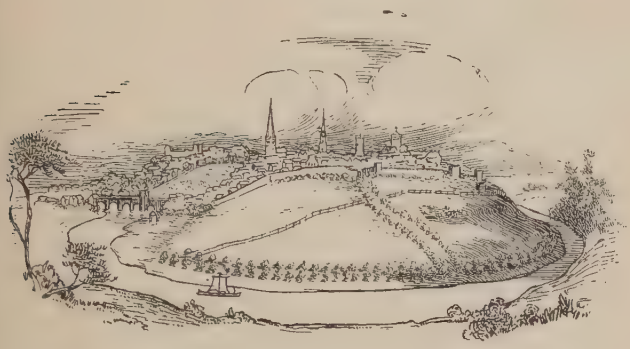

SHREWSBURY (FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING)

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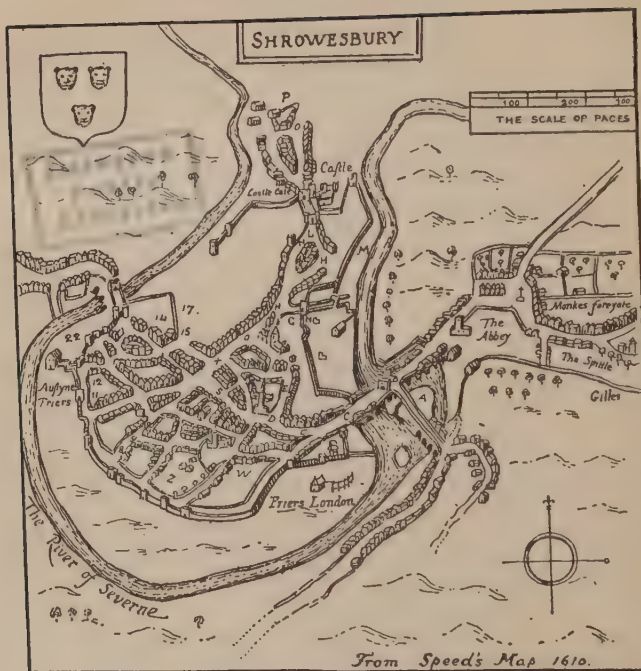

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B	Stone Bridg	N	S. Maryes waterlod	Z	The Colledge	12	Backer Street
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D	Wyle Capp	P	Pintle Broke	2	Market house	15	Rousehill Lane
E	Dogg Pole	Q	The Shembles	3	Hey Strete	17	Rousehill
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L	North Gate	W	S. Chads Almesho	10	Hound Stret	24	Welsh Bridge.

CHAPTER I

SITUATION AND EARLY HISTORY

ROMAN WALL AT WROXETER

IN these days of Inductive Science it is but a trite remark to observe that Geography is the key to History, and that if we would understand the rise and development of any city, careful attention must be paid to its situation and the physical features which form its setting. A glance at the map of Shropshire shows at once that Shrewsbury owes its rise and earliest development to the River Severn. From the standpoint of the inhabitants of this

Shrewsbury

country whom we loosely describe as Britons, Nature offered in the site on which Shrewsbury now stands almost all that was to be desired. Within the embrace of two arms of the river which almost meet, the ground rose to a fair height above the valley through which it flowed, and was, moreover, clothed with trees and brushwood. The stream, which in mid-channel was deep but in places stretched out into wide marshes, defended the spot on every side except the narrow isthmus between its two arms, so that this alone required to be specially guarded, and the alders which abounded on all sides gave cover to those who occupied it. It was an ideal spot for a semi-civilised race to take possession of.

When, however, we proceed to investigate documentary evidence as to the date of its first occupation, we are left very much to conjecture. Various theories on the subject will be found in Owen and Blakeway's great work, but they are mostly mentioned only to be rejected. One fact, however, may be taken as thoroughly established, namely, that Shrewsbury never was a Roman city. It contains no traces of buildings belonging to the Roman period, and no other Roman relics of consequence have been found there. And the reason is not far to seek. Rome exerted her

influence in the district from another centre in the immediate neighbourhood. About six miles away, at the junction of the River Tern with the Severn, and not far from the foot of the Wrekin, stood the Roman city of Uriconium, or, as sometimes written, Viroconium. This appears to have taken the place of an earlier settlement which was the chief town of the British tribe of the Cornavii; but the evidence of monuments[1] found there goes to show that the Romans took possession of the site about the middle of the first century after Christ, in the course of the expedition under Ostorius Scapula, which ended in the defeat and capture of the British chief Caradoc or Caractacus. From this time Uriconium became the centre of Roman power in Shropshire for something like five hundred years. Roman roads passed through it in various directions; Roman villas grew up in its neighbourhood; Roman mining operations, for lead certainly, and probably also for copper, were carried on within the radius of its influence; while in the city itself civil life flourished on the usual Roman lines. Physicians pursued their art of healing, artisans followed their various callings, ladies enjoyed the

[1] Shropshire Archæological Society's *Transactions*, 1st Series, vol. ii. p. 319.

Shrewsbury

pleasures of the toilet, while a great Basilica witnessed the administration of law, and well-heated baths ministered to health and luxury. But in the times of the later Empire there came a change. Danger threatened Rome itself, and the imperial power was compelled to leave distant provinces to care for themselves. In the year 410 the Emperor Honorius proclaimed the independence of Britain, and the Roman legions disappeared from its shores. Uriconium held its position for another century and a half, and some time during its later period fortified itself with walls; but its end was drawing near. Strangers from across the North Sea—Angles, Jutes, and Saxons—harassed England in increasing numbers and effected settlements in one part after another, until Saxon kingdoms almost covered the land. Among the most powerful of these was that of the West Saxons, who in the second half of the sixth century were ruled by two brothers, Ceawlin and Cutha. In the year 577 these gained a great victory over the Britons in the neighbourhood of Bristol, and pushed their way northwards up the valley of the Severn. Then, we read in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, under the date of 584, 'In this year Ceawlin and Cutha fought against the Britons at the place which is

named Fethanleag, and Cutha was there slain: and Ceawlin took many towns and countless booty; and wrathful he thence returned to his own.' The identification of Fethanleag is very doubtful,[1] but probably among the towns which Ceawlin captured on this occasion was Uriconium, the 'white town in the valley,' whose dirge was sung by the British poet Llywarch Hen.[2] It is in the writings of this poet, and in connection with the destruction of Uriconium, that we have the first trustworthy mention of Shrewsbury. Llywarch Hen appears to have been a prince by birth, who came down from what is now Cumberland to his fellow-countrymen in Powisland, and took refuge with a prince named Cynddylan. The home of this prince was Pengwern, and its mention introduces us under its British name to the town with whose history we are concerned. Its mention shows that its existence was contemporary with the fall of Uriconium, and if it was not founded by refugees from its smouldering houses, there can be little doubt that they went largely to increase the number of its inhabitants. But they were not permitted to remain at peace in their new home. The

[1] Shropshire Archæol. Soc. *Transactions*, 3rd Series, vol. i. p. 147.

[2] J. R. Green's *Making of England*, p. 205.

Shrewsbury

elegy of the poet laments the destruction not only of Uriconium, but of Pengwern, whose maidens he bids to behold the habitation of Cynddylan wrapped in flames; and for a time at least the centre of British power was moved further west, possibly, as in later times, to Mathraval, among the wooded hills of Montgomeryshire.

We are left to conjecture what was the extent of the destruction spoken of, but it was unlikely that a position with such facilities for defence would remain for any length of time unoccupied; and when we turn again to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* we find another entry bearing on the subject. Under the heading of the year 606—the year of St. Gregory's death—we have the record of a battle at Chester in which Ethelfrith, king of Northumbria, 'slew numberless Welsh,' including two hundred monks from Bangor Iscoed who had come to aid their countrymen with their prayers; and the account concludes, 'their chief (ealdormann) was named Scromail, who escaped thence with some fifty.' This chief has been identified with Brochmail, prince of Powis, surnamed *the tusked*, whose palace, tradition says, was situated at Pengwern, on the site on which afterwards stood the Collegiate Church of St. Chad.

Meanwhile, however, the contest between Celt and Teuton was becoming gradually more and more unequal. The battle of Chester, just referred to, made a breach between the Britons of Cumbria and the Britons of Wales which was never reunited;[1] and as regards the southern portion, with which we are concerned, it was only a question of time when the Saxon power should drive back the Welsh into their mountain fastnesses.

The struggle was long and intermittent, as the course of this history will show, but as the recognised capital of a British kingdom, Pengwern passed out of the annals of history towards the close of the eighth century. At that period Mercia held the foremost place among the Saxon kingdoms under the sway of Offa, and he succeeded in pushing the Mercian boundary further west than any of his predecessors. The memorial of his success still exists in the form of the great earthwork known as Offa's Dyke, which runs southward from the Dee to the Wye, and in several parts of Shropshire is still comparatively perfect. Portions of this are probably older than Offa's time, but it was he who connected these, and constituted the work as a whole the

[1] Green's *Making of England*, p. 243.

Shrewsbury

boundary of his kingdom.[1] Henceforth Pengwern passed into Saxon territory, and the change was marked by a change of name. Pengwern—the knoll of alders — became Scrobbesbyrig — the settlement among the shrubs; both designations having reference to the character of the site. Another name—that of Amwythig, or the delight—is found in some of the Welsh chroniclers, but it is doubtful how far it was ever generally known by that appellation. Anyway, the name it assumed in Offa's time ultimately became its designation for all time. The harsher form has been softened and has passed through various modifications, but Scrobbesbyrig, Schrobbesbury, Slopesburie, Salop, Shrewsbury,[2] all carry our minds back to the time when the Mercian king made it an English town. Leland, who visited the town in 1539, has not only left us in his itinerary some account of what he saw, but in one of his poems has embodied in a few lines an epitome of its origin and early history:

[1] Cf. *Archæologia*, vol. liii. p. 465.

[2] It should be remarked that the orthodox Salopian pronunciation of Shrewsbury is Shr*ose*bury, not Shr*oos*bury. See an amusing discussion of the point in the opening chapter of Bradley's *Highways and Byways in North Wales*.

'Edita Pengwerni late fastigia splendent,
Imperio cujus subjecta Poisia quondam
Terra, altrix et bellatorum mater equorum.
Urbs sita lunato veluti mediamnis in orbe,
Colle tumet modico; duplici quoque ponte superbit:
Accipiens patriâ sibi linguâ nomen ab alnis.'[1]

Shrewsbury continued a part of the Mercian kingdom till its absorption in the larger realm of England under Egbert in the first half of the ninth century. During the remainder of the Saxon period, the records of its history are but scant. It was marked by the existence of the five ancient parishes which still exist, but the history of these will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter. We have a further key to its status in the coins which were minted there. Early in the tenth century Athelstan made a law to secure uniformity of coinage throughout his dominion, and this enactment specified the number of moneyers in the principal towns. Shrewsbury possessed one such moneyer, proving that while it reached a certain point of importance it did not rank among towns of the first class. This number

[1] 'Genethliacon Edwardi principis Cambriæ,' ver. 445, quoted by Owen and Blakeway. The mention of the horses of Powisland is an allusion to a statement of Giraldus Cambrensis in his *Itinerarium Cambriæ*, lib. ii. cap. xii.

Shrews-bury

was raised to three in the reign of Edward the Confessor; and all through the period from Athelstan to Henry III., the Shrewsbury mint was busy. In the Shrewsbury museum and elsewhere there exists an almost uninterrupted succession of coins produced at Shrewsbury during the reigns covered by that period.[1]

The devastating wave of the Danish invasion hardly touched Shrewsbury, and has left no traces either there or in the rest of the county of Salop. The invaders' ships were not, however, wholly unknown on the Severn. Their memory still survives in the name of Danesford near Bridgnorth, and though no place-names exist which give any hint of settlement in the county, the *Saxon Chronicle* under the date of 894 relates how the invaders made their way by the Severn as far as Buttington near Welshpool, and were there defeated with great slaughter. The credit of this immunity of the county from Danish inroads was mainly due to Ethered, whom King Alfred appointed 'aldorman' of Mercia, and his wife Ethelfleda,[2] who was a daughter of Alfred, and

[1] Shropshire Archæol. Soc. *Transactions*, 2nd Ser., vol. x. p. 253.

[2] In these names and elsewhere the familiar spelling has been adopted, instead of the more correct Æthered, Ælfred, Æthelflæd, etc.

afterwards known as the 'Lady of the Mercians.' During the tenth century, Shrewsbury pursued the even tenor of its way without much incident, but this was soon to be disturbed by the great upheaval of the Norman Conquest.

PILLARS IN ST. CHAD'S CRYPT

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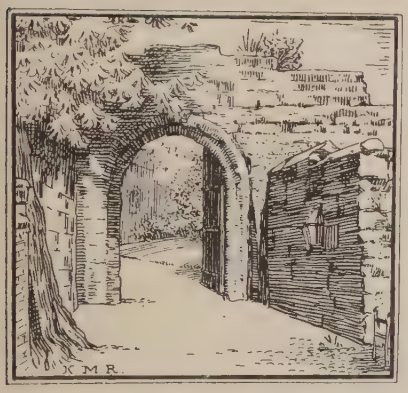
SHREWSBURY *from the* CASTLE

CHAPTER II

THE NORMAN PERIOD



ENTRANCE GATE OF THE CASTLE

IT is somewhat difficult to form an idea of what was the aspect of Shrewsbury at the time of the Norman invasion, but considerable light is thrown upon it by the Domesday record. We learn from it that in the time of Edward the Confessor the town contained two hundred and fifty-two houses, each inhabited by a burgess, so that the whole population would not much exceed a thousand. Of these it was the duty of twelve of the better class (*meliores*) to

Shrewsbury

act as guards to the king when he stayed in the town, and a similar duty devolved upon those who possessed horses when he went hunting in the neighbourhood. That the houses were of wood with thatched roofs we gather from the fact that, if a house were burnt even by accident without negligence, the burgess to whom it belonged was required to pay to the king the large fine of forty shillings, and also a fine of two shillings each to his two next-door neighbours. The houses occupied the high ground now traversed by the streets known as Pride Hill, Butcher Row, and Dogpole, while the slopes and the meadows which stretched to the Severn were either cultivated for the food supply of the inhabitants or supplied pasture for their cattle. There was probably a rampart of some kind following roughly the line of the present High Street, but whether the stone wall, of which the foundations may be still traced on that site, dates back to the Conquest, is open to doubt. Within the space indicated there existed three churches, while just outside there was a fourth dedicated to St. Chad, already alluded to.[1] A fifth church was situated just beyond the Severn on the east, near the spot where it receives

[1] *Supra*, p. 8.

the waters of a lesser stream, which Ordericus Vitalis always speaks of as the Meole,[1] but is now known as the Rea. This church, the chronicler expressly tells us, was of timber, but there is good reason to believe that the others were in part at least, if not wholly, of stone.[2]

We know, further, that a fortress of some kind already stood on the isthmus between the two arms of the Severn, but we have little clue as to its character. Possibly it was still only of wood protected by a stockade, but it no doubt stood on the highest point of the castle site, the spot now occupied by what is known as the Laura Tower. The mound here has almost certainly been added to artificially, and, if so, the work very possibly dates back to pre-Norman times. When and how this fortress and the town it protected passed into Norman hands, we are not told. Norman influence, however, had made itself felt in this part of England before William's invasion. In the reign of Edward the Confessor, Richard, the son of Scrob, had come over among that king's foreign favourites, and on the

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, bk. v. ch. xiv., and elsewhere.

[2] Shropshire Archæol. Soc. *Transactions*, 2nd Series, vol. ii. p. 359 (St. Chad's); 2nd Series, vol. vi. p. 358 (St. Mary's).

southern border of the county had erected a castle which was a centre of terror and oppression to the surrounding district, and whose memory still survives in the name of the parish of Richard's Castle and the earthwork of his fortress. The same neighbourhood was also the home of one who led the opposition against Norman influence in the West Midlands. This was Edric, known as Silvaticus, or Savage, or Guilda, or Wild,[1] and who must be reckoned as among the heroes of Shropshire. His exploits took firm hold of the popular mind, and survive not only in the history but in the legends of the county. Among Shropshire superstitions is one that he still lives, confined with his followers in the lead mines of the Stiperstones, and that whenever a great war is impending they are seen riding at full speed over the hills, with Wild Edric himself on a white horse at their head. In history, he appears as holding a large number of manors all over the county, including one in the author's parish of Condover. These manors, added to the possessions he held in Herefordshire, show him to have been a thane whose power and

[1] The *Saxon Chronicle* calls him 'Edric child,' presumably equivalent to 'Edric the younger,' but always used of one occupying a more or less exalted position.

influence were of wide extent, and as such he refused to submit to the Conqueror. Vigorous attempts were made by the Norman garrisons of Richard's Castle and Hereford to bring him to subjection, but without success. In the year 1067, in alliance with the Welsh, he was able to make reprisals to the extent of reducing the garrison of Hereford to great straits; and two years later, in conjunction with the same allies and the men of Cheshire, he pushed his arms northward as far as Shrewsbury. From the account of Ordericus it appears that the fortress on the isthmus was already in the hands of the Normans, but that the inhabitants of the town chafed under their sway and largely sympathised with the effort to dispossess them. Edric with his Welsh and Cheshire allies, supported by the inhabitants, laid siege to the place, but the Duke sent help to the Norman garrison, and Edric was compelled to retire. Before doing so, however, he is said to have burnt the town, by which we must probably understand the part of it which was in immediate connection with the fortress. This was in the year 1069, and the only further notice of Edric intimates that he made his submission to the Conqueror, and accompanied him in his expedition to Scotland in 1072. If this is correct, we

can well understand William's policy in what he did, for Edric was a man whom it was safest for him to keep under his own eye.

But as Wild Edric disappeared from the arena of Shrewsbury, there came on the scene one greater and much more widely known. This was Roger de Montgomery, its first Earl. Roger was connected with Duke William by ties of blood relationship, and had been his friend and helper before the invasion of England. He had assisted him in the consolidation of his power in Normandy, and when the Duke determined to assert his claim to England Roger contributed as many as sixty ships for the conveyance of the troops. At the battle of Senlac or Hastings he commanded the right wing, consisting of the French mercenaries who had thrown in their lot with the Norman duke, and he distinguished himself by personal prowess in the fight. When the victory was gained, William did not forget his services. Among the first gifts of the conquered territory Roger received a large part of Sussex as Earl of Arundel. After this he returned for a while to Normandy, where he acted as guardian of the Duchy with William's wife Matilda, but coming back to England in 1071 he received the further reward

of the Earldom of Shrewsbury together with practically the whole of Shropshire. He accordingly took up his abode in the town which gave him his title, and his first act was to build a castle which should effectually overawe the surrounding neighbourhood. As already said, we can only conjecture what sort of fortress up to this time occupied this spot; nor have we any detailed knowledge of Roger's own work, but it probably consisted mainly of a square Norman keep such as we are familiar with at Kenilworth and many other places. It has, however, wholly disappeared and been superseded by later work, with the possible exception of the entrance gateway. This still retains Norman features, and may in part at least go back to Roger's time. Shrewsbury Castle became the Earl's chief abode for the rest of his life, and on the whole—as contrasted with some others of the Norman barons—his rule seems to have been fairly humane. We find, indeed, complaints on the part of the burgesses that they were required to pay the same taxes as were paid in the time of Edward the Confessor, though the building of the castle and other causes had diminished the number of those on whom the taxes were levied; but there were many towns in worse case.

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As to Roger himself, his character seems to have varied considerably according to the domestic influences brought to bear on him. He was twice married, and no two women could well have been more different than the two wives in question. The first was Mabel de Belesme, an heiress who brought him wide possessions, but who was cruel and rapacious even beyond her time. So much was this the case, that in 1072 she was murdered in her own room by four brothers whom she had unjustly despoiled of their patrimony. A year after her death, Roger married Adeliza of Puiset, who was a woman of religious character, and used her influence over her husband for good. The Shropshire historian Eyton in his account of Quatford[1] quotes from one of the early chronicles an interesting story of how Earl Roger met Adeliza in the Forest of Morf on her coming to England, and at her request built there a church to St. Mary Magdalene in fulfilment of the vow she had made when her ship was in peril in crossing the Channel; and under her influence this was followed by other acts in the same direction. The Priory of Wenlock, whose history as a religious house dated back to St. Milburga in the seventh century, was

[1] Eyton's *Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 106.

refounded by Roger as a Priory of the Cluniac Order; but his most important work of this kind was reserved for Shrewsbury itself. In concert with his chaplain Odelerius he took possession of the little wooden church just beyond the river, of which mention has already been made, and grafted on it the Abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul, the church of which is still one of the most important ecclesiastical edifices of the county. This will be spoken of more in detail in a future chapter; but it not only owed its foundation to the great Earl, but was closely connected with his later history. His kinsman and patron, William, died in 1087, and six years later he felt his own end to be drawing near. Though the date of his birth is uncertain, he must have been by this time far advanced in years, and he prepared for his death in the manner that was characteristic of his time. Laying aside his state he enrolled himself as a monk in the Benedictine Abbey he had founded, and after a few days—on July 27th, 1094—he died within its walls and was buried in the stately church he had built, between the high altar and that of the Lady Chapel. Ordericus describes him as 'wise, moderate, and a lover of justice, who cherished the gentle society of intelligent and

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unassuming men.'[1] It is possible that if this character had come from the pen of one less closely connected with him than Ordericus, or if it had been written during the *régime* of Mabel de Belesme, the description might have been less flattering; but all will acknowledge the truth of another remark of the chronicler, that he was 'among the greatest of the English nobles.'[2]

Before passing from Earl Roger, some further notice must be taken of the writer to whom we are indebted for almost all we know of him and his times. Mention has already been made of Odelerius, the chaplain and friend of Roger. This Odelerius, priest though he was, married and had a family—for celibacy was by no means universal—and one of his sons was named Orderic, or, in its more familiar form, Ordericus Vitalis. It is beyond our scope to speak in detail of his great book on the ecclesiastical history of England and Normandy, but he merits notice because his childhood was spent in Shrewsbury, and he never forgot his English birth and associations. The simple story of his life cannot be better expressed than in the devout and pathetic words with which he con-

[1] Ordericus, bk. iv. ch. vii.

[2] *Ibid.* bk. v. ch. xiv.

cludes his history: 'Now, worn out by age and infirmities, I have a strong wish to bring this book to a close. . . . I am now in the 67th year of my age, after a life spent in the service of my Lord Jesus Christ. . . . To Thee then, Almighty God, I address my discourse. . . . I was baptized on the Saturday of Easter at Attingham [Atcham], a village in England which stands on the bank of the great river Severn. There, by the ministry of Ordericus the priest, Thou didst regenerate me with water and the Holy Spirit, and gavest me the name borne by this priest, who was my godfather. When I was five years old I was sent to school at Shrewsbury, and I offered to Thee my services in the lowest order of the clergy in the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul the Apostles. While there, Siward, a priest of great eminence, instructed me in letters for five years from Carmenta Nicostrates, and taught me psalms and hymns, with other necessary learning. Meanwhile Thou didst honour the church beforenamed, which stood on the river Meole and belonged to my father, by causing a venerable monastery to be constructed on the site through the pious devotion of Earl Roger. It was not Thy good pleasure that I should long serve Thee in that place subject to disturbance from my

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relations, for such are often a burden and hindrance to Thy servants. . . . Wherefore, O glorious God, Who badest Abraham to depart from his own land and his father's house, and the society of his kinsmen, Thou didst put it into the heart of my father Odelerius to separate me entirely from himself, and devote me in body and soul to Thee. He therefore, amidst floods of tears, delivered me, also weeping bitterly, to the monk Reynold, and sending me into exile for the love of Thee, never saw me afterwards. Being then a young boy, it was not for me to oppose my father's will; and he promised me, for his part, that if I became a monk I should partake with the Innocents the joys of Paradise. . . . I was ten years old when I crossed the British sea, and arrived in Normandy, an exile, unknown to all and knowing no one. Like Joseph in Egypt, I heard a language to which I was a stranger. But, supported by Thy merciful goodness, I found the utmost kindness and attention among these foreigners. I was professed as a monk in the monastery of St. Evroult by the venerable Abbot Mainier, in the 11th year of my age; and I received the tonsure as a clerk on Sunday the 11th of the calends of October [Sept. 21st]. He gave me the name of Vitalis, in place of that I

received in England, which seemed barbarous to the Normans. This name he borrowed from one of the companions of St. Maurice the martyr, whose festival was on that day. In this monastery, through Thy goodness, I have lived 56 years, loved and honoured by all my brethren and associates far more than I have deserved. . . . On the ides of March [March 15th], when I was 16 years old, I was ordained sub-deacon. . . . Two years afterwards, on the 7th of the calends of April [March 26th] Serlo, Bishop of Seez, conferred on me the order of deacon, in which I did Thee willing service for 15 years. At length, in the 33rd year of my age, on the 12th of the calends of January [Dec. 21st] William, Archbishop of Rouen, laid on me the burden of the priesthood . . . and I have now faithfully performed my sacred ministrations to Thee, O God, in joyfulness of heart for 34 years. Thus, O Lord God, my Creator and Life-giver, thus through these various degrees hast Thou bestowed Thine unmerited gifts upon me, to set apart the years of my life for Thy service. In all places to which from times long past I have been led by Thee, Thou hast caused me to be loved by Thy servants, not for my own worth, but of Thy free goodness. I give Thee thanks, O gracious Father,

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for all the benefits conferred upon me, and praise and bless Thee with my whole heart. . . . Give me the will to persevere in Thy service . . . until by Thy help I obtain the inheritance of eternal salvation.'

THE CASTLE (FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING)

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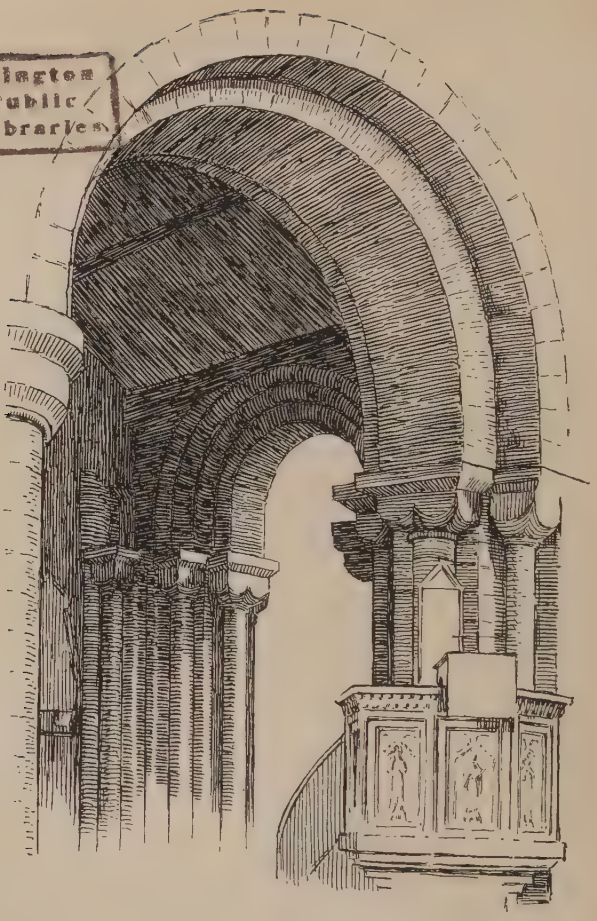

ABBEY CHURCH (*Interior*)

CHAPTER III

SHREWSBURY AND THE WELSH WARS—THE TOWN WALLS AND CASTLE

TOWN WALL (PRIDE HILL)

EARL ROGER, as already mentioned, died in the year 1094. He left behind him several sons, of whom the eldest, Robert de Belesme, inherited the Norman estates of his mother, while his second son, Hugh de Montgomery, succeeded to the Earldom of Shrewsbury. Already the Welsh were showing themselves troublesome neighbours. The *Saxon Chronicle* relates that in the year 1094, 'Hugh, Earl of Shropshire,' fought against one of the numerous bodies into which they were divided

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and put them to flight, 'but, nevertheless, the others all this year ceased from no evil which they could perpetrate.' The passage seems to imply that Welsh incursions had begun even before the death of Roger; anyway, Hugh's tenure of his position was both troubled and of short duration. In the year 1098, the *Chronicle* tells us, 'Earl Hugh was slain in Anglesea by vikings,' and Ordericus tells us how his death occurred by an arrow shot by Magnus, king of Norway, adding the further information that he was buried in the Abbey of Shrewsbury. He was succeeded by his turbulent brother, Robert de Belesme, who obtained the earldom from the king by a large money payment. This king was William Rufus, but as far as Belesme had any attachment to the family of the Conqueror, it was to Robert Curthose; and no sooner was Rufus dead than he entered into a conspiracy to place Robert on the English throne as against Henry I. He had already strengthened his position by the erection of various castles on his domains, including that of Bridgnorth, and his sway was everywhere marked by the worst qualities of a feudal baron. But it was not long before these evil courses brought their own retribution. Summoned before Henry to give account of his doings, he made his

escape, but was proclaimed an outlaw, and the king proceeded at once to take possession of his estates. One after another the earl's castles surrendered to the king, and from Bridgnorth, on its submission, Henry proceeded to Shrewsbury, whither Belesme had betaken himself. Proceeding by a new route over the steep wooded height of Wenlock Edge the king took his turbulent subject by surprise, with the result that Belesme met him at the gates of the town and, confessing his treason, laid the keys of the castle at his feet. Henry contented himself at the time with taking possession of his estates and banishing him from England—a sentence, we are told, which was hailed with joy on the part of those over whom he had tyrannised. A few years later, Henry took the opportunity of further treachery on Belesme's part to arrest him in Normandy, and sent him over to Wareham Castle. Here he lay till his death, but when that occurred is unknown: the last of the Norman Earls of Shrewsbury passed away, 'unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.' Meanwhile the king showed his regard for this part of his kingdom in various ways. It had the benefit of his administrative ability in the rearrangement of the Shropshire Hundreds, by which their administration was ren-

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dered more easy;[1] and the later years of his reign, after the earldom passed into his own hands, were marked by at least two visits to the county. Two charters of his are in existence, dated at Bridgnorth, and two precepts were issued by him at Norton in the author's parish of Condover.[2] As this is scarcely four miles from Shrewsbury, there can be little doubt that he visited the town at the same time, but whether he came in consequence of disturbances by the Welsh, or only to hunt in the surrounding forests, we cannot say. His interest, however, is testified by an extant charter of King John, in which he confirms to the burgesses of Shrewsbury 'all liberties, free customs and quittances as they had them in the time of King Henry our great grandfather.' In 1135, however, Henry passed away, and his death was followed by all the evil results of a disputed succession. The civil war between Matilda and Stephen, which lasted nearly twenty years, served to bring out the worst features of feudalism, and the *Saxon Chronicle* closes its story in wailing over the cruelty and oppression which were everywhere rampant. Each baron made it the occasion to fortify his castle and

[1] Eyton's *Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 23.

[2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 246, and vol. vi. p. 10.

oppress his neighbours, and Shropshire had its share in this state of anarchy. Shrewsbury Castle was held by William Fitzalan, who had espoused the cause of Matilda, and in 1138 it sustained a siege of nearly a month at the hands of Stephen himself. In the end Fitzalan fled, but the castle was taken by assault, and the garrison to the number of nearly a hundred were put to death. This success was a great help to the cause of Stephen for the time, but he had none of the qualities which could make the most of his advantages, and at length in utter weariness both sides came to an agreement that Stephen should be king for his life and that Matilda's son Henry should succeed. The anarchy, however, had one beneficial effect—the misconduct of the barons and the consequent disordered condition of country life drove people into the towns, and town life began to develop itself and assume a proportion which it had never possessed in the earlier days. This development of the towns received a further stimulus from the organisation of their internal government under Henry II., and boroughs entered on a career of progress which went on without any important break for three hundred years.[1] Mean-

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[1] Mrs. Green's *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 11.

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while the Welsh continued to harass the borderland, and in 1157 Henry marched against them. He penetrated North Wales as far as Snowdon and exacted homage from the Welsh prince, but the expedition had little permanent result, for we find him in the year following engaged in suppressing a rebellion in South Wales; and in 1165 he was again in North Wales. On this occasion he apparently passed through Shrewsbury at the head of a considerable expedition, which encountered the Welsh at the foot of the Berwyn hills. In this encounter, however, the advantage seems to have been on the side of the Welsh, and the king retired to Chester.[1] Other expeditions followed with no better result. And so matters went on through the reigns not only of Henry II. but of John and of Henry III. Any one may read the account in Dr. Powell's *History of Wales*,[2] and may study at his leisure the relationships between the various Welsh princes with unspellable and unpronounceable names. Of these princes, however, one stands out conspicuous beyond the rest in the person of Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, commonly known as

[1] Eyton's *Itinerary of Henry II.*, p. 82.

[2] *The History of Wales*, written originally in British by Caradoc of Shancarvan, Englished by Dr. Powell, 1774.

Llewelyn the Great. For a period of something like forty years he disturbed the peace of Wales and the border counties, but he laboured hard for the independence and supremacy of his country, and was the greatest of the native rulers of Wales. King John attempted to secure his friendship by giving him in marriage his natural daughter Joan, but his efforts both in diplomacy and force of arms met with only indifferent success. The Welsh were eager allies with the English barons when they compelled him to sign the Great Charter at Runnymede in June 1215, but in this crisis Shrewsbury took the side of the king. The result was that in the same year Llewelyn, in concert with the other Welsh princes, marched against the town, and attacking it by way of the English Bridge, succeeded in making it once more for a short time a Welsh possession. It was recovered by the king in the following year, but there was no real victory over the Welsh prince, and the trouble went on into the following reign. Henry III., who was but a boy, paid several visits to Shrewsbury, and made various efforts to overawe the Welsh or secure their friendship by treaty, but with little success; and in 1234 Llewelyn again advanced with fire and sword and laid the country waste to the very gates of Shrewsbury.

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In 1240, however, his long career came to a close.

It is pleasant for a moment to turn from these visits to the town made by enemies to one of a peaceful character, which took place during the period of which we are treating, though somewhat before the date at which we have arrived. We are largely indebted for the light thrown on the days of the Angevin kings to Gerald de Barri, better known as Giraldus Cambrensis. He was born at Manorbeer, in Pembrokeshire, about the middle of the twelfth century, and being a clever boy of studious habits, he gravitated, almost as a matter of course at that period, into Holy Orders, and became Archdeacon of Brecon, in the diocese of St. David's. It was a time when the air was full of the idea of wresting the Holy Places from the grip of the Saracen, and among the most earnest advocates of a Crusade was Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, who succeeded to the Primacy in 1180, and who ultimately died in Palestine. In his enthusiasm for the Cross he determined to make an effort to awaken the ardour of the Welsh in the good cause, and with this object, in 1188, he made a tour through Wales, preaching the Cross wherever he had the opportunity.

He chose the archdeacon as his companion, and Giraldus was admirably adapted for the post. He was a man in whom self-satisfaction reigned supreme, and in 'personally conducting' his archbishop through his native country he was exactly in his element. Beginning at Hereford, they spent a month in South Wales, and then passed into North. Here they somewhat hurried over their work in order to keep Easter at Chester, and then they turned southwards through Whitchurch and Oswestry to Shrewsbury. The account of his visit is best given in his own words. 'We then came on to Slopesbury, a town almost surrounded by the river Severn: here we spent a few days to recruit, after the fatigues of our journey, and here too, thanks to the admonitions of the Archbishop and the gracious sermons of the Archdeacon of Menevia (St. David's), we persuaded many to follow the Cross. We also excommunicated Owain de Keveiliauc (Owen Cyveiliog) because he was the only Welsh prince who had refused to come with his people to meet the Archbishop.'[1] The reader will not fail to notice the self-complacency with which he uses the first person plural, and the

[1] Giraldus Cambrensis (Rolls Edition), vol. vi. p. 144; Shropshire Archæol. Society's *Transactions*, 3rd Series, vol. iii. p. 37.

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high opinion he had of his own eloquence. He will observe also the way in which he regarded an act of disrespect, apart from moral offence, as something to be visited with ecclesiastical anathema. It throws a curious light on mediæval methods of thought as well as action, but the picture of the archbishop and his companion preaching the Crusade in one or more of the town churches—which had already assumed stately proportions—or perchance in the open air at some spot where the narrow streets opened on a wider space, is one which we would not willingly lose.

As already stated, however, peaceful visits from Welshmen were only a pleasing interlude in a long-prevailing strife—the exception, not the rule; but when Henry III. closed his long reign of weakness, and Edward I. succeeded, the time had come for grasping the nettle of Welsh insubordination with a firm hand. The chief power in Wales at the time was held by Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, grandson of Llewelyn the Great, and in many respects he resembled his grandfather. In the civil war during the concluding years of Henry's reign he had allied himself with Simon de Montfort, and he afterwards married his daughter. In this war he first came into con-

TOWER ON THE OLD WALLS

tact with Edward, and showed himself so able an antagonist that a treaty was made with him on terms of unusual liberality. This secured peace till Edward became king, but on his accession Llewelyn, on various pretexts, delayed his doing homage, and at last defied the royal mandate. Edward determined to crush his foe, and in the spring of 1277 led an expedition against him. In this expedition the king had the support of Llewelyn's brother David and other Welsh chieftains who had been offended by his over-

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bearing conduct towards them. Edward adopted new methods of warfare, cutting down the forests[1] which afforded opportunities for surprise, and eventually blockading Llewelyn's forces in the fastnesses of Snowdon, to which they retreated. The Welsh prince submitted, and by a treaty signed at Conway gave up a large portion of the territory granted to him by the previous treaty; but he was recognised as Prince of Wales, and in the following year he married Eleanor Montfort, the ceremony being graced by the presence of Edward himself. The king followed up his success by the introduction of the English shire system and English law into the territories given up to him,[2] but this had the result of causing much discontent among the semi-barbarous Welsh, and in 1282 they broke out into open revolt. Of this revolt David, who had gone over to the side of his brother, was the leader, and hostilities began by his falling on Hawarden Castle and capturing Edward's justiciar. Llewelyn joined him and laid siege to the castles of Rhuddlan and Flint, while the Welsh lords of South Wales rose at the same time,

[1] Bridgeman's *Princes of South Wales*, p. 159.

[2] Tout's *Edward I.*, p. 112. See also Morris's *Welsh Wars of Edward I.*, *passim*.

and the whole nation was ablaze. The king was deeply moved when he heard of this revolt, and he determined once for all to crush the power which had troubled the western border so long. He began by moving the courts of justice to Shrewsbury, and then marched himself against the insurgents in the north, while the Earl of Gloucester was despatched to the south. In vain Archbishop Peckham endeavoured to act as mediator; both sides were bent on war to the bitter end. The success of the king was not uniform, but Llewelyn, in a visit he made to encourage the insurgents in the south, was slain—probably by treachery—in an obscure skirmish near Builth. David held out some months longer; but the king took up his residence at Conway and gave him no rest, until at length, in June 1283, he was betrayed by his own followers, and, after being detained for a while at Rhuddlan, was sent in chains to Shrewsbury. Here a parliament was summoned to deal with the prisoner—a parliament which stands out in English history as the first in which representatives of the commons took their share in the deliberations by legal authority. It consisted of barons, knights, and burgesses; but the spiritual lords were not summoned, probably because of the immediate reason for which

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it was called. The king himself during its session appears to have stayed at Acton Burnell as the guest of his Chancellor, Robert Burnell, Bishop of Bath and Wells, and after the affairs of David had been dealt with, the parliament itself was adjourned for its remaining proceedings to that village. It is uncertain where in Shrewsbury the parliament met. Traditionally it was in the Castle, but it is very unlikely that it contained a room of sufficient size—the Chapter House of the Abbey is much more probable. The proceedings would not occupy any long time, for the facts of David's rebellion could not be denied. He was condemned and sentenced to immediate death, but there is a quaintness about the ghastly details of his execution which is valuable for the light it throws on the feeling which the Welsh wars had evoked. His sentence was that he should suffer five different kinds of punishment. He was first to be dragged at the tails of horses through the streets of Shrewsbury to the place of execution, which was probably at the High Cross, which stood near the spot now occupied by the Post Office; this was because as a knight he had proved traitor to the king who had conferred that honour upon him. Then he was to be hanged for the murders he had committed at

Hawarden Castle, and this was to be accompanied by the burning of his heart and bowels, because those murders had been committed on Palm Sunday. After this his head was to be cut off, and his body quartered and sent to different towns of the kingdom.[1] After this there was no serious outbreak on the part of the Welsh, and their subjugation was completed by the erection of castles at the most important points, which served at once to overawe the natives and to protect the English settlers who were encouraged to make their home in the Principality. The strongholds still remaining at Rhuddlan, Conway, Carnarvon, Criccieth, Harlech, and elsewhere, are the abiding monuments of a conquest in which Shrewsbury was interested to an extent which it is impossible to overrate.

The Town Walls and Castle

The mention of Welsh castles brings us back to the Castle of Shrewsbury itself, and the walls with which it was connected; both of which in their completed form date from the period we have been considering.

With regard to the walls of the town, considerable obscurity hangs over their earlier history.

[1] Bridgeman's *Princes of South Wales*, p. 173; *Chronicle of John de Trokelowe* (Rolls), p. 41.

THE TOWN WALLS

There can be no doubt that from whatever time the isthmus between the two arms of the river was fortified, a defence of some kind, if only a stockade, would be extended from the fortress on each side as far as the river, but the erection of the first stone wall across the isthmus is ascribed to Robert de

Belesme.[1] About the same time, or possibly a little later, the town as it then existed, occupying only the summit of the high ground—'super Sabrinam in vestice collis posita,' as the chronicler Higden describes it —was for the first time encircled by a stone rampart. Starting from the gate of the Castle it passed along the ridge of the high ground at the back of what is now Pride Hill, at the bottom of which it turned along the line of the present High Street, past St. Julian's Church which overhung it, to the top of the Wyle Cop, where it again followed the ridge back to the Castle. Of the part however extending from Pride Hill to the Wyle Cop, only scant traces exist at the back of more modern buildings.[2]

The Town Walls and Castle

Meanwhile, however, the town continued to grow in size and importance. The members of its Merchant Gild built for themselves houses of better character, and with wider surroundings, while the constant raids of the Welsh reminded them that they had always an enemy at their gates. It therefore became necessary both to extend and improve their defences. This led to the erection, apparently in the reign of Henry III.,

[1] Owen and Blakeway, vol. i. p. 57, note.

[2] Shropshire Archæol. Society's *Transactions*, 1st Series, vol. vi. p. 257: 'The Inner Wall of Shrewsbury.'

of the wall as it existed to comparatively modern times. This followed the old line at the back of Pride Hill, but as the ground began to slope downwards another wall branched from it in the direction of Roushill, and extended to the Welsh Bridge. It seems probable that this became the main defence, leaving the old wall as an inner rampart. From the Welsh Bridge the new wall turned up Claremont Bank to the spot where the present St. Chad's Church stands, and where one of the original towers formerly stood. Then it passed along Murivance, where the only existing tower is still to be seen, and so along the still remaining portion of the wall to the English Bridge, where it turned up the hill at the back of what is now Dogpole, and, passing the Watergate, again joined the fortifications of the Castle. By a still extant charter of Henry III., bearing date the 41st year of his reign (1257), the bailiffs of the town received a grant of the customs on articles brought in for sale, to be spent on the repair of the town walls; and among the bailiffs' accounts is a roll dated some three years later which tells how some of the money was spent: a new tower was built below the Castle, and the wall elsewhere was extensively repaired with stone dug from the

Quarry.[1] It is clear from this and other entries that it was a period when Shrewsbury began thoroughly to realise the importance of its defences, and probably the repair and strengthening of the walls was soon followed by similar work at the Castle itself. In 1269, Prince Edward received from his father a grant of the town and Castle to be kept by him during the king's pleasure,[2] and this probably marked the beginning of a reconstruction of the fortress. All that remains at present, except the entrance gateway already alluded to, and additions made in modern times, is thoroughly Edwardian in character. It belongs to the class of fortress to which has been given the name of Concentric,[3] but which was often modified by the shape of the site. It is said that Edward derived the idea from the Eastern fortresses which he saw during his crusade: any way he adopted it, and it became the normal type of castles built during his reign. In the case of Shrewsbury, what took place appears to have been this. The Norman Keep of Earl Roger, no doubt,

The Town Walls and Castle

[1] Historical MSS. Commission—Shrewsbury MSS., p. 3 and p. 25.

[2] Owen and Blakeway, vol. i. p. 131.

[3] Clark's *Mediæval Military Architecture*, vol. i. p. 157.

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occupied the highest point of the site on part of which the Laura Tower now stands. In Edward's time this was incorporated within a larger circuit of tower and wall. Entering through the Norman gateway there was a curtain wall on the left which connected this gateway with a round tower which still remains. This again was connected with a similar tower, also preserved, and then another curtain wall wound along the brow of the hill, past a postern gate and tower, to the highest point, where stood another round tower of more massive proportions, now represented by that bearing the name of Laura; and this in turn was connected by another wall with the gateway. This area formed the inner bailey, and contained around its courtyard all the domestic buildings, and the chapel, which was dedicated to St. Michael. Beyond this, in the direction of the town, was the outer bailey, containing another courtyard and various buildings of minor importance, together with the chapel of St. Nicholas. Practically, only a part of the buildings on one side of the inner bailey now remain in anything like their original form; but as the stranger arriving at the railway station still turns his eyes upwards to the left as he emerges from the doorway, he cannot fail to be

impressed both by the situation and the massive work of the fragment which remains.

CASTLE GATE (FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING)

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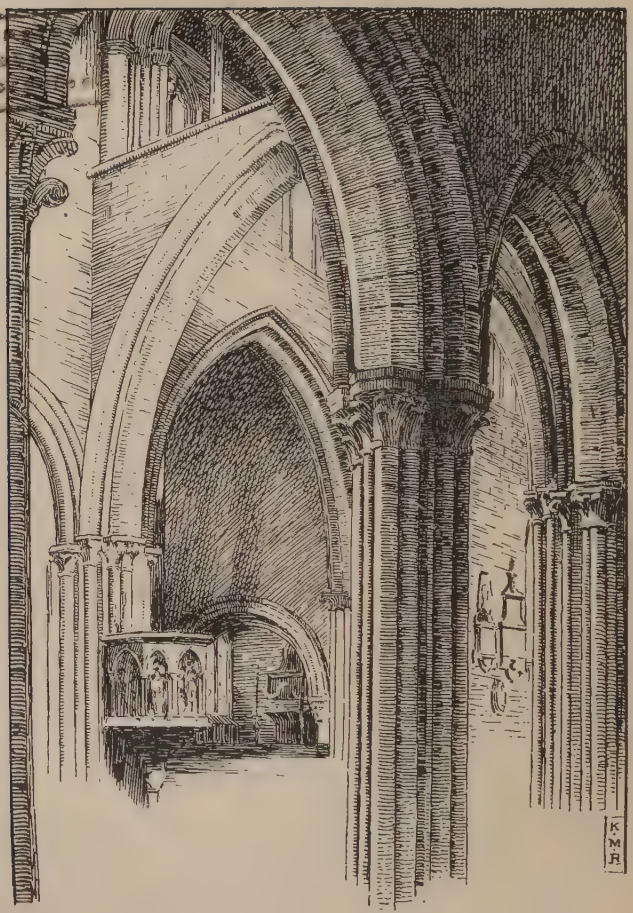

St Mary's Church

CHAPTER IV: PART I

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY—PAROCHIAL CHURCHES

WEST END OF ABBEY

WE now turn to the ecclesiastical history of the town during the Middle Ages. And for this purpose we must go back for a moment to the earliest period, when its inhabitants were Celtic and its name was Pengwern. The British town occupied only the high ground, bounded by what are now Pride Hill, High Street, and Dogpole, but there is little doubt that it contained within its narrow circuit two ecclesiastical foundations now

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represented by the churches of St. Mary and St. Julian. St. Mary's occupies an open space in the very middle of what was then the town, and the very large number of churches in Wales dedicated to the Virgin makes[1] it highly probable that Pengwern would contain such a church. St. Julian's occupied a site which was equally striking. It stood on the very borders of the town, and overlooked whatever wall or other defence bounded it on that side. The dedication of this church is very peculiar. Its patron saint—St. Juliana—was a maiden martyr of Nicomedia in Asia Minor, who was put to death at the beginning of the fourth century. The esteem in which her memory was held in England is shown by the existence of two biographies in MSS. of the first half of the thirteenth century which have been printed by the Early English Text Society, but the dedication (which must not be confused with that of St. Julian, the patron of travellers) is extremely rare, and the undoubted existence of a church on the spot at a very early period makes it difficult to account for. It has been suggested with considerable probability that the original dedication was to a British saint,

[1] Llanfair = Church of St. Mary. Cf. Shropshire Archæol. Society's *Transactions*, 2nd Series, vol. iv. p. xii.

—possibly St. Sulien who, according to tradition, came from Armorica with St. Cadvan in the beginning of the seventh century—and that in Saxon times it was changed to St. Juliana, whose name was similar in sound, and who at the time was held in high repute.[1] All this, however, is based on inference and not positive evidence. With regard to St. Mary's, it was stated by the Commissioners appointed by Henry VIII. to inquire into the lesser monastic establishments of Shropshire, that the church was founded by King Edgar for the maintenance of a dean, seven prebendaries and a parish priest, but though he may have established the college, there is little or no doubt that the church was of earlier foundation; we are not, however, on sure ground till we come to Domesday. That record gives the possessions which had belonged to it under Edward the Confessor and at the time of compilation, and we gather from it that the church already enjoyed a well-established position. Its importance is further

[1] The parish church of Corwen, among others in Wales, is dedicated to St. Sulien. Compare Smith and Wace's *Dict. of Christian Biography*, vol. iii. p. 526. Those who have visited Arles may remember a church occupying an exactly similar position, overlooking the city wall, and bearing it is said the equally unaccountable dedication to St. Columba.

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attested by an anecdote related by William of Malmesbury that on the occasion of St. Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, visiting the town soon after the Conquest, the inhabitants remonstrated with him for preferring to say his prayers in the little oratory of St. Peter, to the neglect of the more imposing church dedicated to St. Mary. And that there was no falling off in the esteem in which it was held is shown by the fact that a century and a half later, in 1232, this church was chosen as the place for holding the court which had for its object the bringing of the Welsh war to a satisfactory conclusion. It owed its importance largely to the fact that it was a Royal Free Chapel, which exempted it from outside jurisdiction on the part either of the bishop or the Pope. It was collegiate, consisting of a dean and ten prebends, and though the prebends were done away with at the Reformation, the church retained its privileges as a royal peculiar till within a few years past, the vicar being what was technically called his own 'ordinary,' that is having power to grant marriage licences at his own will, and in other ways to act independently of the diocesan bishop.

As a building, St. Mary's is the most interesting church in Shrewsbury. It contains specimens of

every style of architecture from Norman downwards, while its graceful and well-proportioned spire is one of the most conspicuous landmarks of the town. In the interior the nave arcade is the feature which first arrests attention. The two sides are slightly different in date, but both are peculiar as being distinctly Early English, though retaining the circular form of arch usually associated with the previous style. The large Trinity chapel south of the chancel was erected in the second half of the fifteenth century as the chapel of the Drapers' Gild,[1] and the spire was added and other extensive alterations made about the same time. The north aisle is remarkable as having been reconstructed during the Commonwealth, and though its Gothic is not perfect, it is a more than creditable performance for the period. The church contains two ancient monuments, an altar tomb in the Trinity chapel to one of the Leybourne family, and an incised alabaster slab to Nicholas Stafford and his wife, but the chief glory of St. Mary's is its stained glass. Of this the larger part is foreign, but that of the great east window is English, and has a very interesting history. Its

[1] Their hall still remains almost unaltered. It is the black and white house opposite the south porch of St. Mary's Church.

ST. BERNARD WINDOW
IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH

date is fixed as the middle of the fourteenth century by the kneeling figures at its base, and the legend in Norman French 'Pray for Sir John de Charlton who caused this glass to be made, and for the Lady Hawise his consort.' As it is a matter of history that these two were great benefactors to the Franciscan Friars in Shrewsbury, it has been conjectured with considerable probability that the window originally occupied a place in the church of that Friary, but if so, at the dissolution of the Religious Houses, it was moved to old St. Chad's Church, where it remained till the fall of that edifice in 1788. It was then transferred to its present position in St. Mary's. It is what is known as a 'Jesse' window, presenting in a series of panels the descendants of Jesse culminating in our Lord. At the time of its transfer considerable repair was necessary, chiefly in the head of the window and its outer lights. Of the foreign

glass, the window of three lancets on the north side of the chancel contains the history of the Life of St. Bernard, and is reputed to be the work of Albert Dürer. It is certain that it was made for the Abbey Church of Altenberg, which was no great distance from Dürer's home at Nuremberg, but all beyond this is conjecture. During the wars of the first Napoleon it was taken down for safety, and on the dissolution of the Abbey was brought to London, where it was bought in 1845 by the then vicar of St. Mary's, and placed in its present position. The church owes to the same vicar—Rev. W. G. Rowland who held the living from 1827 to 1851—almost all the rest of the stained glass in its windows. Most of this formed part of a great purchase from the dissolved Abbey of Herchenrode in Belgium in 1802, of which the larger portion fills the windows of the Lady Chapel of Lichfield Cathedral. It belongs to the fifteenth century as witnessed by the date 1479 in the easternmost window of the south aisle, which is also remarkable as containing a figure of Charlemagne with a scroll underneath entreating his prayers. There are some quaint Flemish medallions in the windows of the vestry and the south porch of somewhat later date. Till recent years the vicarage of

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St. Mary's was closely connected with Shrewsbury School, the appointment being vested by Queen Elizabeth in the Bailiffs and Chief Schoolmaster, and restricted if possible to the son of a burgess who had been brought up in the school.[1]

Of the other church which claims to go back for its foundation to British times, viz., St. Julian's, the author was himself vicar from 1879 to 1892, the patron then being the Earl of Tankerville as the representative of Richard Prince, of the Whitehall, into whose family the advowson passed in the seventeenth century. Its peculiar dedication has been already discussed, and if any doubt remained as to the sex of its patron saint, it is settled by the Latin of the Domesday record. We there learn that the church of St. Juliana—'ecclesia Sanctæ Julianæ'—possessed half a hide within the liberties of the town. Like St. Mary's, it was a Royal Free Chapel, but it is uncertain when it lost its privileges as such. In 1255, it is described as in the gift of the king, and as having two prebendaries, one of whom also held the chapel of St. Michael within the castle. This was also a Royal Free Chapel, and it was possibly the

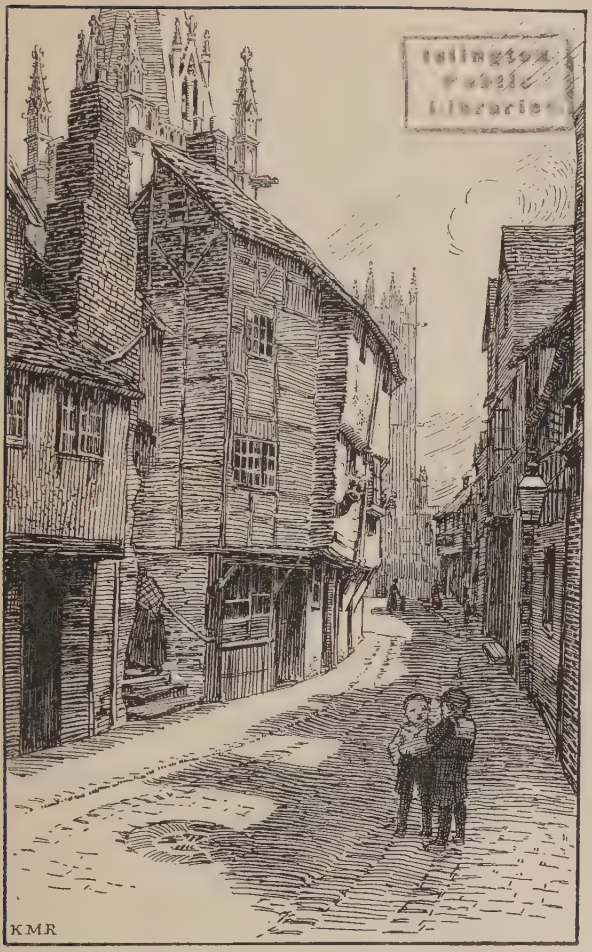
[1] *Notes on St. Mary's Church, Shrewsbury*, by Archdeacon Lloyd, *passim*.

tenure of both by William de Batall, the prebendary in question, which led to the amalgamation of the two parishes. Any way, this took place at an early period, and an interesting reminiscence still remains. Among the possessions of St. Michael's was the deer park of the Norman earls, and a detached piece of the parish of St. Julian still perpetuates a memory of the fact in the name of Darville or Derfald or Deerfold. St. Julian's had reason to rue this amalgamation, for when the chantry of Battlefield was founded after the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403, it was endowed, among other gifts, with the tithes of St. Michael and the chapel of St. Julian thereto belonging; and so almost its entire endowment became ultimately lost to the church. The old edifice of St. Julian was of transitional Norman, with some later additions in the Perpendicular period, including the upper portion of the tower; but in 1748, the body of the church was taken down and rebuilt in the classic style then fashionable. Fortunately, however, the tower was left standing, and its lower storey offers some interesting features, which form a contrast to those noticed in the nave of St. Mary's. The pillars on which the structure rests are of massive Norman character, while the arches are pointed, that leading

into the nave being so to an extent that is rare even in Early English. The church possesses no ancient monuments, except a slab which lies just within the south door. This is peculiar as having an inscription in Norman-French to the memory of Edmund Troumwyn, in letters of the twelfth or thirteenth century, round the edge, while the middle has been utilised for inscriptions of the seventeenth. St. Julian's old church contained, among other chapels, that of St. Mary, belonging to the Shearmen's Gild, whose hall stood close by,[1] and whose business was very important in connection with the Welsh woollen trade. It was on the north side of the chancel, and old engravings show it to have been of Perpendicular architecture.

There was a third church within the circuit of the first wall which was already a flourishing foundation in Saxon times. This was the church of St. Alkmund, which was situated between St. Mary's and St. Julian's. In this case too the dedication is peculiar and not easy to account for. Alkmund was a Saxon prince of the kingdom of Northumbria, who was slain in the year 800 by the servants of Eardulf,

[1] On the site now occupied by W. Hall, Wateridge, and Owen's Auction Rooms.



FISH · STREET :

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who had usurped the throne, but there is no record as to why he received canonisation, or at what period the honour was conferred upon him. He must, however, very soon have taken rank among popular saints in Mercia, for Derby and Whitchurch, as well as Shrewsbury, have churches dedicated to him, and that of Shrewsbury appears to have been founded within little more than a century after his death. The only evidence of foundation is a chronicle of Lilleshall Abbey, which asserts that it was founded by Adelfleda, Queen of the Mercians. From a comparison of dates, this could only have been Ethelfleda, daughter of Alfred the Great, who was known as 'The Lady of the Mercians,' and who has been already mentioned as the chief instrument in preventing the Danes from overrunning the county. Such a foundation would be in entire accordance with what we know of her position and character, and if so, the church must have come into existence before the year 915, when she died. In the Domesday survey it is described as possessing a considerable number of manors which it had held in the Confessor's time, and which were probably the original gift of Ethelfleda: it was a collegiate foundation, and then consisted of a dean and twelve prebendaries. It was not destined, how-

ever, to retain its rich possessions long. In the reign of Henry I., within half a century of Domesday, we find the prebendal estates in the hands of Richard de Belmeis, Bishop of London, on whose death, in 1127, they were conferred by the king on his nephew of the same name. Richard de Belmeis the younger had already been appointed by his uncle Archdeacon of Middlesex, but the appointment was set aside as he was only a boy at the time. In due course, however, he took possession of that office as well as a prebend of St. Paul's, and the prebendal estates of St. Alkmund's; and he proceeded, in conjunction with his brother Philip de Belmeis, to carry out the idea he had formed of founding a great Abbey. The site fixed on was in the wood of Donnington, but it was very soon changed for Lilleshall, and the rich endowments of St. Alkmund's Church were diverted for the erection and maintenance of the Abbey in question; the monks were of the order of St. Nicholas of Arras, a branch of the canons of St. Augustine. It is a flagrant example of a great ecclesiastic as early as the middle of the twelfth century diverting to other purposes the revenues of a parish church. St. Alkmund's was destined at a later period to witness a disgraceful act of another kind in the wanton de-

Ecclesiastical History: Parochial Churches

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struction of the mediæval fabric. Old engravings, as well as written descriptions, show this to have been a building of the greatest architectural interest. It had many features in common with St. Mary's, which it equalled in its proportions, and it was rich in monuments, especially brasses. But alas! in 1788, the fall of St. Chad's Tower caused a panic in the town, and though a careful survey showed the fabric of St. Alkmund's to be sound, it was resolved by the vestry to take down the old church and erect another in its place. There is little doubt that this resolution was due not merely to the bad taste of the age, but to the persuasions of individuals interested, any way its result was a loss to the architectural history of the town which can never be sufficiently regretted. The walls proved so strong that they had to be blown up with gunpowder, and so little care was taken of the monuments that the brasses were actually sold by weight as old metal. Everything was dispersed, and the work of rebuilding was committed to a firm of local stonemasons, who produced a miserable specimen of pinchbeck Gothic, which is said to have required repair before it was a year old, and which has defied the efforts of a more tasteful age to improve to any appreciable extent.

Fortunately, the fine Decorated spire was left; but as the scanty income of the living is an abiding testimony to its early spoliation by ecclesiastical influence, so the tower and spire are standing witnesses to a piece of vandalism as great as ever disgraced the annals of a town.

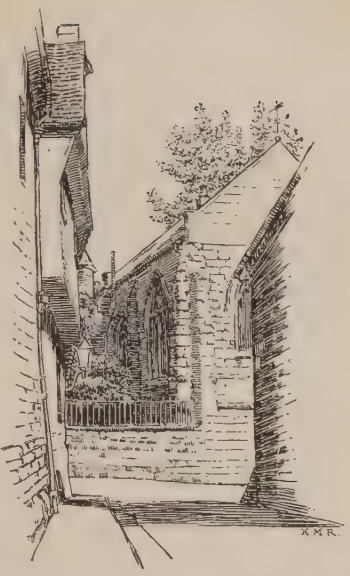
Ecclesiastical History: Parochial Churches

We now pass outside the first walls of the town to the Church of St. Chad. It has already been mentioned that in the days when in British times Shrewsbury was Pengwern, the site of this church was occupied by the palace of the British Prince of Powys, and that the town passed into Saxon hands under Offa, King of Mercia. Tradition says that Offa converted the palace in question into a church, and dedicated it to St. Chad, who, a century before, had been Bishop of Mercia, with his episcopal seat at Lichfield. This story of the foundation by King Offa is perhaps more than doubtful, but that the church attained a considerable position in the Saxon period is proved not only by the extensive manors which it possessed in Edward the Confessor's reign, as testified by Domesday, but by the Saxon architecture found on its site. In 1889, extensive excavations were made of a crypt which was known to have existed under the north transept of the mediæval church. The

architecture of some of the pillars which had supported the roof of this crypt is distinctly Præ-Norman, but another discovery pointed to the existence on the site of a still earlier Christian edifice. Two ancient graves were discovered, which from their position east and west were almost certainly Christian, but their early date was proved both by the fact that the bodies rested not in coffins, but in cysts built up of separate stones; and also that they were at such a level as to make it highly probable that the burials took place before the crypt was constructed.[1] The mediæval church, which mostly dated from the first half of the thirteenth century, was a very imposing edifice. It had the usual features of transitional Norman, with some later additions, but its large dimensions gave it great dignity. It had a massive central tower, and this at length proved its destruction. In the latter half of the eighteenth century it was greatly neglected, after the manner of the age, with the result that in 1788 the tower fell and destroyed a portion of the nave and north transept. Instead of rebuilding the shattered portion, it was unfor-

[1] Shropshire Archæological Society's *Transactions*, 2nd Series, vol. ii. p. 359.

tunately resolved to erect a new church on another site. It was intended that this should be a Gothic edifice, but the architect called in contrived to force the hands of those who represented the parish in the matter, and ultimately the present Church of St. Chad was erected on a site overlooking the Quarry. Its style is Classic, but its round design is almost unique. Its chief and almost only merit is that it will seat a large number, and has excellent acoustic properties. Unfortunately, one of the few towers of the town wall then remaining was demolished to make room for the church on the site chosen. It only remains to add that St. Chad's in its earlier period was collegiate, and claimed also to be a Royal Free Chapel, but if this was ever the case, it lost the privilege at an early period. The



REMNANT OF OLD ST. CHAD'S CHURCH

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college, which lay to the south-west of the church, but of which the only remains are foundations on which modern houses have been erected, was dissolved by Henry VIII., and the income passed into lay hands. Another ecclesiastical building lay on the north of the church in what was known as the Sextry. It communicated with the church by a covered way across what is now Princess Street, and is supposed to have been the residence of the vicars choral. Possibly the half-timbered house in Golden Cross Passage formed a portion of it. The only remaining portion of the church itself formed the south chancel aisle, and may have been the Lady Chapel. It was spared when the rest of the church was taken down owing to a doubt whether it belonged to the parish or to the bishop, being used at the time for episcopal purposes, and known as the Bishop's Chantry. The somewhat late details of its architecture show it to have been a fifteenth century addition to the earlier body of the church. St. Chad's has always occupied an important position among the churches of the town, and has been closely identified with municipal life. The old church contained a considerable number of interesting monuments, which were dispersed among other

churches after its fall, and in some cases have wholly disappeared. The Jesse east window which was presented by the parishioners to St. Mary's has been already described.

ABBEY (FROM AN ENGRAVING)

We now pass wholly outside of the peninsula caused by the windings of the Severn. As already mentioned, there stood in Saxon times, just on the other side of the river, near to the spot where it received the waters of the Meole brook, a little wooden church which had been erected by Siward, a Saxon Thane of the royal family. Earl Roger presented this to Odelerius, the father of Ordericus Vitalis, and the chronicler gives an interesting account of what took place with regard to it. Odelerius, though a secular priest and married, had a high esteem for monastic life, and his son tells how he exhorted Earl Roger to second his own efforts for the foundation of an abbey on the spot. Odelerius offered his own possessions as the nucleus, and the Earl, under the influence partly, no doubt,

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of his Countess Adeliza, accepted his chaplain's advice. On the 25th of February 1083, he went in company with his chief officers to the Church of St. Peter, which Odelerius had already erected in place of the timber building, and deposited his gauntlets on the altar in token that he gave the whole suburb situated outside of the east gate for the erection of an abbey. The erection of domestic buildings for the monks soon followed that of the church, and it was occupied by brethren from the Norman monastery of Seez or Say. Odelerius's son Benedict entered the society at once, and after the death of Earl Roger within its walls, Odelerius himself took the monastic habit there and also died as a brother. This was the foundation of the great Benedictine Abbey of Shrewsbury, which soon rose to a high position among the monastic houses of England. It is true that we are expressly told that the Earl himself only endowed it moderately (*mediocriter*), and this is confirmed by the Domesday survey, which was made during the time that the abbey was in course of erection; but others soon supplied what was lacking on the part of the founder. During the next two centuries endowment followed endowment until it became one of the

richest foundations in England, and its mitred abbot took his place as a baron in the councils of the realm. It must, however, be confessed that many of these endowments were made at the expense of the parochial clergy—the author's own parish of Condover being among those which suffered—and were obtained by means that were wholly unworthy of religious profession; indeed it is needless to point out that this greed of property—this desire on the part of the monastic houses to become great landowners—was among the most conspicuous causes which brought about the deterioration and ultimate fall of the monastic system. Among other things, after the manner of the time, the monks of the abbey coveted the possession of relics, and in Stephen's reign—to use a modern form of expression —they 'discovered' St. Winefride, and after due negotiation with the Welsh, who appear to have had but little reverence for their saint, her bones were transferred from Gwytherin in Denbighshire to Shrewsbury with much ceremony, and at length deposited with great display of veneration in the Abbey Church. These, with other relics of which a list still remains, became a source of much attraction and consequent gain to those who had

them in charge. Such gains, however, whether by way of endowment unjustly acquired, or as the outcome of superstition, were, in the nature of things, short-lived—it was inevitable that they would fall before the new learning, which in a few centuries would arise and shed its light on Western Europe.

The Abbey was dissolved among the greater monasteries in Henry VIII.'s reign, and then ensued an act of spoliation as unjustifiable as had been some of the acts of acquisition. In spite of petitions from the corporation, first that the buildings might remain 'to receyve the prince's grace or any other nobilitie that shall resorte to this towne,' and afterwards, that the Abbey might be erected into a college or free school, the estate was granted by the king to two applicants apparently connected with the Court, who the next day sold it to William Langley, a tradesman of the town, in whose family the property remained for several generations. By degrees every part of the Abbey buildings was dismantled and ruined, and the nave of the church was only saved by the fact that it was the church of the parish as well as the monastery. The sole remains of the domestic buildings now existing are some fragments of wall incorporated

in a builder's workshop, and the very interesting pulpit of the refectory. This latter stands at present amid the incongruous surroundings of a coalyard, but it is *in situ*, and so serves to show the general position of the monks' quarters on the south side of the church, some of which were finally swept away when the present London and Holyhead road was constructed across the site. The purpose of the pulpit, it must be remembered, was not for preaching, but for one of the monks to read some edifying book to the brethren during their meals in the frater or refectory. It is an interesting gem of the architecture of the fourteenth century, and its details, especially the central boss of the roof inside, will repay attention. With regard to the church, which may be said

REFECTORY PULPIT

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now to combine within itself the original Church of St. Peter, the Abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the Church of the Holy Cross (originally an altar within the Abbey) it is difficult to say whether any part of it belonged to the first stone church[1] erected by Odelerius, but the pillars and arches of the eastern portion of the nave are of massive Norman work of simple detail. The western portion is of late Decorated Architecture with some Perpendicular features, and this is still more marked in the fine western window of the tower. On each side of this window externally are niches which contained statues of St. Peter and St. Paul, and above it is another niche still occupied by a figure in armour, probably intended for King Edward III. The north porch with its two upper chambers is worthy of notice, but some of its interesting features were 'restored' away at the end of the eighteenth century.

The interior has much dignity, which has been greatly increased by the rebuilding in recent years of the choir and transepts at the expense of an

[1] Two burials going back to Saxon times were discovered a few years ago in the construction of a sewer along the side of the street nearest the church.

anonymous donor. The effect is scarcely improved by the new reredos, which is not in keeping with the massiveness of its surroundings, but otherwise the architect has well surmounted the difficulties he had to face in the work. The church contains a large number of monuments, but only a few of them belonged to it originally. The one which invites attention first is the figure of a knight near the east end of the south aisle, which is traditionally the monument of Sir Roger de Montgomery. In fact, at the Heralds' visitation in 1623 it was definitely assigned to him, and a modern brass over it affirms the same, but it is certain that the armour belongs to a later period, so that if it represents the great earl it must have been carved something like a century after his death. In the same aisle, close to the second pillar from the west, is a monument to an ecclesiastic, of peculiar design. At the top is a large foliated cross, and below it is the effigy, which, however, only occupies one side of the slab. The other is occupied by figures of a chalice, in which is the wafer, a book, and a candle in its stand, while near to the head of the figure is a bell. These, it need hardly be pointed out, were all insignia of the priestly office, the bell, book, and candle being used in pro-

nouncing excommunication[1] on offenders. On the one edge of the monument are the letters—of perhaps the thirteenth century—T. M. O. R. E. U. A., which have been conjectured to stand for Thomas More, Vicarius Abbatiæ. There was such a person at the beginning of the fifteenth century, but the monument is almost certainly at least a century earlier. It moreover originally belonged to St. Giles's Church. Not far from this, under the outside wall, near the entrance door, are three recumbent figures. Nearest the wall is the effigy of a cross-legged knight in mail armour which was brought from Wombridge. It is supposed to represent Walter de Dunstanville, the lord of Ideshale, or Shifnal, who lived at the close of the twelfth century and was a great benefactor to the Priory of Wombridge. The two figures which lie in juxtaposition to this are of special interest as having been, in their original form, possibly unique. They were brought from St. Alkmund's, and originally lay on the same altar tomb; not, however, side by side, as now placed, but end to

[1] Cf. 'The Cardinal rose with a dignified look,
He called for his candle, his bell, and his book.
In holy anger, and pious grief,
He solemnly cursed that rascally thief.'
—*Ingoldsby Legends*, 'Jackdaw of Rheims.'

end,[1] and were no doubt intended to represent members of the same family, if not, as some have conjectured, the same person. The only difference between the two figures, which are draped in a long robe reaching to the feet, is that in the one this robe is turned back so as to show a suit of plate armour underneath. Nothing whatever is known as to whom they represent.

Passing to the north aisle we have between the first and second pillars the remnant of a stone screen, which no doubt formed part of the shrine of St. Winefride, and immediately beyond it, eastward, a recumbent figure, which was brought from St. Chad's. The chief peculiarity as regards dress is the coif fitting close to the head and tied under the chin. From this it has been inferred that it represents a Judge of one of the secular courts, who may possibly have died in the town while on circuit, but everything rests on conjecture.

Lastly, the recess to the north of the Tower is occupied by three altar tombs, each having two effigies, while above them on the Tower Wall is a mural monument with half-length figure in high relief. This last came from St. Alkmund's, and com-

[1] There is an engraving in Owen and Blakeway of the monument in its original form.

memorates John Lloyd, alderman of the town, who died in 1647.

Of the three double altar tombs, that immediately under the Lloyd monument came from Wellington Parish Church after its demolition. It commemorates William Chorlton, or Charlton, who died in 1524, and his wife Anne, who died twenty years later.

Next to this monument, in the centre, is another of unusual height, to the memory of Richard Onslow, who was Speaker of the House of Commons in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The Latin epitaph, which is long, describes the other offices which he held, including that of Recorder of London and Solicitor-General, and his many personal qualifications. He was the son of Roger Onslow of Shrewsbury, and must have been a man of marked ability to have attained the position he held at the time of his death, which took place when he was only forty-two. The Taylor MS. says this occurred on the occasion of his paying a visit to his uncle, who was then bailiff of the town—the date was 1571. His wife rests by his side, and several children are represented beneath. On the lower edge of the monument is a later inscription to the effect that it was repaired in 1742 by Arthur Onslow, who was himself then Speaker of

the Commons, and that Richard Onslow, who was Speaker in Queen Anne's reign, also belonged to the same family. This monument was originally in Old St. Chad's.

The last monument to be noticed is the one adjoining, under the North Wall. It is to the memory of William Jones, alderman of the town, and Eleanor his wife, who died in 1612 and 1623 respectively, and who were the grandparents of 'Master Jones the lawyer,' in whose house Prince Rupert stayed, and who afterwards became Chief Justice. This monument came from St. Alkmund's. All the three altar tombs last described are painted, and are not only of historical interest but afford a good opportunity of studying the costume of the Tudor and early Stuart periods. The font, which is clearly part of a Norman pillar, should be noticed, and also a stoup for holy water which now stands near it.

There was one other ancient church belonging to the town which was closely associated with the Abbey. This was the Church of St. Giles situated at the top of the Abbey Foregate. St. Giles was the patron saint of Lepers, and the church was originally erected for the use of a Leper Hospital which existed here at least as early as the reign

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of Henry II. It was of small dimensions, but in the year 1137, when the bones of St. Winefride were being transferred to the Abbey, we are told that the sacred relics were deposited before the Altar of St. Giles until arrangements could be made to receive them at the Abbey with due solemnity, 'and the faithful people round about came and committed themselves to the prayers and merits of the Holy Virgin.' The only portions of the old church now remaining are the west wall and the south wall and porch, which belong to the thirteenth century. The Font also is old, and is said to have belonged originally to High Ercall Church.[1] The rest of the church consists of modern enlargements, at various periods, in which there has been but little effort to make the new work harmonise with the old.

[1] *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, vol. v. p. 192.

OLD ST. ALKMUND'S (FROM AN ENGRAVING)

GOLDEN · CROSS · PASSAGE :

CHAPTER IV: PART II

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY—THE FRIARS

OLD ST. CHAD'S (FROM AN ENGRAVING)

THUS far we have spoken of churches which either in their origin or development were parochial and have ministered to the spiritual wants of the inhabitants of Shrewsbury, without interruption, century after century, to the present time. There were a considerable number of smaller ecclesiastical buildings in different parts of the town which have wholly disappeared, such as the Chapels of St. Blaise on College Hill, St. Werbergh on Swan Hill, St. Catherine on Coton Hill, St. Cadogan in

Frankwell, and St. George and St. John just over the Welsh Bridge. These mostly had their origin as private chapels attached to the houses of various families, but the last-mentioned belonged to Almshouses. Leaving these, however, of which in many cases even the site is uncertain, it remains to speak of the great religious movement of the thirteenth century as it affected Shrewsbury. That movement was the coming of the Friars. Although the ecclesiastical history of the Middle Ages is much more studied and much better understood now than was the case a few years ago, it will not be superfluous to remind readers that friars must not be confused with monks. Monks lived within the walls of their monastery, which was most commonly situated in the country. The essential idea of monasticism was seclusion from the world—the care of the individual soul by a constant round of prayer and intercession. It is true that, especially in their earlier days, monasteries were centres of learning and of hospitality to the needy, as well as promoters of agricultural progress, but the inherent weakness of monasticism as a system was its tendency to selfishness; and too often, as monasteries grew in wealth, discipline grew lax and the whole tone of their

spiritual life degenerated. The movement of the friars was a reaction from monkish wealth and degeneracy, and it would be difficult to find anything higher than the friar's life in its ideal. Instead of living within sequestered walls in the country, the friar betook himself to the town, and there taking up his abode in what we now call the 'slums'—among the dregs of the population, diseased alike in mind and body, he shared their wants and their sorrows, and did what was possible by sympathy and help to teach them the lesson of hope both for this world and the next. The essential idea of the friars was ministration—care for others—the cultivation of what has been well called 'the holiness of helpfulness.' The movement owed its origin to two individuals who, in different countries, and to some extent with different aims, arrived at the same conclusion as to the needs of their age. One was St. Dominic, born at Calahorra in Spain in the year 1170. The work to which he specially devoted himself was to bring back to the orthodox faith those who had wandered from it. Many of the means he adopted were intolerant and cruel, but he must in this respect be judged by the standard of his own age and not ours. His first efforts,

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however, were all that could be desired. He began by going among those whom he desired to convert, as an apostle of love, without worldly possessions, and ready to share the humblest lot. In 1216 he founded his order with the special object of preaching and defending the faith. Meanwhile in Italy a man of gentler spirit was growing up and developing his work. St. Francis was born at Assisi in the year 1182, and belonged to the highest type of religious enthusiast. He was unconsciously prepared for his work by a business training and even in a sense by a gay and spendthrift youth, for he learned the needs of men of the world, and at the same time the impossibility of finding satisfaction for the soul either in wealth or pleasure. Another influence, however, still more powerful for good, was his pure and holy love for a pure and holy woman. It is somewhat uncertain at what period St. Clara came into St. Francis's life—whether in the early days when he was a gay cavalier and she little more than a child—or whether at a later period, when he had forsaken the world and by his fervent preaching awoke in her a fire of enthusiasm to follow his example of renunciation. Anyway, there was deep attachment between them, and the love which under

other circumstances would have probably found its outlet in home life, was devoted to mutual encouragement and help in the great work to which they both devoted themselves. In has been said in reference to this attachment: 'For saints as for heroes the supreme stimulus is woman's admiration';[1] and we who live now can see that Francis was none the less a saint because his greatest friend was a woman, in communion with whom he was most truly himself, and whose friendship stimulated him to his noblest efforts for the good of the world.

St. Francis loved, above all, to study the footsteps of the Son of Man. He caught the spirit of His simple life—His love of nature—His tender sympathy with sorrow and suffering—His unceasing endeavours to alleviate misery—until, it is said, his body caught the enthusiasm of his soul, and his hands and feet and side became marked with the signs of the Master's Passion.

The outcome of this enthusiasm on the part of

[1] Sabatier's *Life of St. Francis* (English translation), p. 148. 'It is at St. Damian that St. Francis is the most himself; it is under the shade of its olive trees, with Clara caring for him, that he composes his finest work, that which Ernest Renan called the most perfect utterance of modern religious sentiment, the Canticle of the Sun.'—*Ibid.* p. 166.

St. Francis was the founding of an Order of which the members were to be Brethren (*Fratres*, Friars). They were to be less than the least (*Minores*, Minors), to own nothing but their one set of coarse garments, and their life was to be devoted to the necessities of the poor, both spiritual and bodily.

There was need for such work. The monasteries had done their best work and become country landowners, while in the towns there had grown up a class almost outside of the care of the Church. For a century or more town life had shown increasing vigour—trade had developed and the members of the trade gilds had prospered and grown rich—but alongside of this increasing wealth there had grown up that worst form of poverty, which is to be found in the low quarters of a town. Men and women who, by offences against the Forest laws or otherwise, had made the country too hot to hold them, sought refuge within the walls; workmen outside of the gilds, whose wages were small and uncertain, and who had little protection against oppression, increased in numbers; and all became huddled together in the most insanitary quarters, with the result of sharpened intellects on the one hand, and diseased bodies on the other.

It was to help wretches such as these that the friars began their work, and, because it met a crying need of the age, the movement spread with rapidity. The Dominicans or Black Friars were the first to arrive in England, in 1221, and the Franciscans or Grey Friars followed in 1224. The latter received their first hospitality from the former, and this association was productive of good to both. The Dominicans adopted the vows of poverty which had originated with St. Francis, and the Franciscans caught an enthusiasm for learning, which their founder had discouraged.

As might be expected, the movement produced offshoots of more or less importance. One of these was the Order of Augustinian or Austin Friars, also known as Friars Eremites, who must not, however, be confused with Austin Canons, who were monks and had houses in Shropshire, at Haughmond and Lilleshall. The origin of the Austin Friars is somewhat uncertain, but they appear to have taken their rise in Italy—possibly by the union of several smaller orders—and to have received formal recognition from the Pope about the middle of the thirteenth century.

Each of the three Orders mentioned had settlements in Shrewsbury, and of two of their houses

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fragments still remain. All were situated near the river, and the sites of two of them, at least, must at the time have been very uninviting. The exception was that of the Dominicans, which was situated on the slope below the site of the present Salop Infirmary. No vestige of their settlement remains, but the size and importance attained by its buildings is attested by the fact that, a couple of centuries later, two of the children of Edward IV. were born within its walls. These were his second and third sons, Richard and George, the former being one of the two princes murdered in the Tower by order of Richard III.

The possession of property, in the shape of a settled home, by the friars was at first a difficulty. As mendicant orders their vows forbade any form of ownership, but as time wore on a local habitation became a necessity, and the difficulty was got over by vesting the property in the Corporation of the town where it was situated, for the benefit of the order. We possess an interesting narrative of the coming of the Franciscans into England, in the Chronicle of Thomas de Eccleston,[1] and he tells us that at Shrewsbury the king gave them a site, on which the church was

[1] *Monumenta Franciscana* (Rolls Series), vol. i. Cf. Jessopp, *Coming of the Friars.*

erected by a certain burgess named Richard Pinde, and the domestic buildings by another burgess called Laurence; but he adds that in the latter case, by request of brother William, in his zeal for poverty, Laurence removed the stone walls of their dormitory and at great expense substituted walls of clay. The site thus given by the king was not of much value; it lay outside the town wall, between the Wyle Cop and the river, and was marshy and liable to floods. We do not know how long Laurence's mud walls remained, but in due course the buildings grew to considerable size, and if the conjecture is correct that the 'Jesse' window now in St. Mary's Church was originally in that of the Grey Friars, it must have been an edifice of very imposing proportions. A considerable remnant of the domestic buildings still exists in what are now cottages, near the modern foot-bridge across the Severn, but they are of much later date than the foundation of the friary, and possibly formed part of extensive repairs due to Dr. Duffylde, who was warden in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII., and was renowned for his preaching powers.

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The Austin Friars had their home at the opposite end of the town, near to the Welsh Bridge at the

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bottom of what is now Barker Street. The site must have been less inviting even than that of the Franciscans, for it was not only marshy and damp, but had been the town burial-place at the time when burial with religious rites in consecrated ground had been forbidden, during the years the kingdom lay under an interdict in the reign of John. This, however, would be no drawback in the eyes of the early friars, and the king, to whom the waste spot belonged, gave it to the Order. It was outside the walls, the nearness of which appears from the remaining ruins to have somewhat cramped their buildings; but, as in the case of the other friaries, they grew to a considerable size. Their church possessed the right of sanctuary, and seems to have had around it an extensive cemetery, in which some of those who fell in the battle of Shrewsbury, in 1403, found a resting-place. Before the dissolution, however, the place seems to have fallen very much into decay, though there still exist considerable remains, which are now in a builder's yard.

It may be convenient to mention here another survival of mediæval times of a different kind, which only came to an end about a quarter of a century since, namely what was known as Shrewsbury Show.

In its later developments it was secular to the last degree, but its origin was the religious procession of Corpus Christi. The observance of this festival was first enjoined in the second half of the thirteenth century by Pope Urban IV., and one part of the ceremonial was the carrying of the Host in procession. This was associated in many towns with the acting of miracle plays, but whether such was the custom in Shrewsbury is unknown. The earliest mention of the ceremony occurs in the Bailiffs' Accounts for the year 1521, in the entry, 'Paid for wine given to the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, President of our Lord the King's Council in the Marches of Wales, and to other Commissioners of our Lord the King, at the general procession on the

THE SHOEMAKERS' ARBOUR

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Feast of Corpus Christi, 3s. 8d.' It would appear from this that in the earlier period all the principal people connected with the town took their part in the procession, but it was specially the festival of the trade gilds; and when the religious part of the ceremony was discontinued at the Reformation, it became a day of merry-making in special connection with them. In 1595 the trades made a change in their proceedings, probably in consequence of Puritan opposition.[1] On the other side of the river lay the district of Kingsland, a piece of unoccupied ground which belonged to the burgesses. It was decided to make the procession thither and there to hold their revels. Accordingly, shelters which bore the name of 'arbours' were erected on Kingsland for the different trade companies, in which the principal members dined on the occasion of the show. The gateway of the Shoemakers' Arbour still survives, and now stands in the part of the Quarry known as the Dingle. It was unfortunately in the nature of things that this show should degenerate, and, in spite of various efforts to revive and improve it as a town holiday, it gradually became a scene of riot and

[1] Miss Burne's *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, pp. 451-460. Cf. Chambers's *Book of Days*, vol. i. pp. 704-708.

excess, which was nothing but a disgrace. The result was that in 1878 it was suppressed by order of the Home Secretary, and Kingsland was laid out for building. Shrewsbury School was moved thither to a new and commanding site, and Kingsland now forms one of the most popular suburbs of the town. Thus it is that

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> 'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.'[1]

[1] Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur*.

GREYFRIARS

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CHAPTER V

FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES—THE BATTLE OF SHREWSBURY—COURT OF THE MARCHES

GROPE LANE

FROM the beginning of the fourteenth century onwards, Shrewsbury enjoyed a considerable period of tranquillity with few incidents to mark its history. The end of the Welsh wars made it less important from a military point of view, and so it received less attention from the headquarters of government. It received indeed some marks of distinction from Edward II., one of them being

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the receipt, as a principal town of the realm, of a quarter of the body of Sir Andrew de Harcla, whom the king had executed for treason; but during the long reign of Edward III. it was comparatively forgotten. The king was too much absorbed in his wars with Scotland and France to give much attention to the domestic affairs of his own kingdom; and in this, as well as the preceding and succeeding reigns, the burgesses seem to have pursued the even tenor of their way without any interference from outside. The bailiffs' accounts still extant show that they duly elected representatives to attend the various parliaments, and paid the expenses incurred in doing so. When great men visited the town, they were duly presented with 'courtesies' (*curialitates*) in the shape of wine and other forms of entertainment. Efforts were made from time to time to secure increased privileges from the Crown by way of charter, and to bring the turbulent spirits of the town into order by improved administration of justice. It was only when Henry IV. had taken possession of the throne that Shrewsbury again emerged into prominence in connection with general history. Richard II., by his folly and misrule, had played into the hands of his enemies, and

when Henry of Lancaster, after his exile, claimed not only the restoration of his own forfeited estates, but proceeded to claim the crown, his usurpation was regarded in the light of a relief, and he became Henry IV. with the general approval of the nation. But he had not sat long on the throne before some of those who had assisted to place him there determined to displace him. The spring of the year 1403 found him in a critical position. Owen Glyndwr was in arms in Wales, defying the power of Prince Henry, who had his headquarters in Shrewsbury, and who needed both money and men. The Scots were in arms in the north, but had been so far kept in check by Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and his son Hotspur. The king had reached as far as Lichfield on his way to the north, when he was thunderstruck by the intelligence that the Percies had broken out into open revolt, and with a numerous army, including the Scotch Earl of Douglas, were on their way to make common cause with the rebels in Wales, having been also joined by Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester, who had been hitherto the trusted adviser of Prince Henry. The king, as the result of this news, changed his plans and made a forced march to Shrewsbury to support his son. Meanwhile, Hot-

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spur marched south through Cheshire in command of the Northumberland force, his father being prevented by illness from accompanying him. He had hoped for two things, in both of which he was disappointed—one was that he would be joined at Shrewsbury by Owen Glyndwr, and the other that he would arrive there before the prince could receive help. Owen, however, was still in South Wales, apparently ignorant of the course of events; and when Hotspur arrived before the gates of Shrewsbury, the banner of the king was already floating from the keep of the castle. Hotspur accordingly retired to the neighbouring village of Upper Berwick, where he spent the night. The following day (Friday, July 21st), the king drew up his forces for an engagement, on the open ground lying to the north of the town, which, in contemporary documents, is variously spoken of as Haytleyfield, Husseyfield, or Bullfield. His forces considerably exceeded those of his opponents, but he was none the less anxious, if possible, to avoid a battle, and early in the day he sent the Abbot of Shrewsbury to offer terms of peace. But the Percies had gone too far to retrace their steps, and the Earl of Worcester rendered peace impossible by a defiant and insulting answer. And so, about midday, the

king ordered an advance, and the battle began. It raged fiercely as long as daylight lasted. At first the Cheshire archers of Hotspur threw a portion of the king's army into confusion and victory seemed within his grasp; but the king himself, as he fought beside his banner, formed a rallying-point round which the combat was thickest, and both sides fought with a bravery and determination which nothing could exceed. More even than was usually the case in those days, the battle became a series of single combats between distinguished men of both sides, and time after time this or that warrior was reported dead, only to reappear and engage again with some other foe. At length, however, the rebel army turned and fled. The slaughter on both sides had been terrific. Hotspur had been killed, and the Earls of Douglas and Worcester taken prisoners; and when the moon that night rose on the field, and then suffered eclipse, it was but a symbol of the eclipse which had passed over the face of the whole chivalry of England. 'Such was the end of this horrible day, "one of the wyrste bataylys that ever came to Inglonde, and unkyndyst"; a day "rather to be celebrated with teares than triumphs," fought out between Englishmen, with a fierceness

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hitherto unequalled, and a slaughter hitherto unknown.'[1]

Two local traditions should be mentioned in connection with the battle. One—which is very probably true—is the tradition that in the morning of the day, Hotspur was cast into sudden gloom by hearing the name of the place where he had passed the night. On asking for his sword he was told it had been left at Berwick, on which he turned pale, saying, 'Then I perceive that my plough is drawing to its last furrow, for a wizard told me in Northumberland that I should perish at Berwick, which I vainly interpreted of that town in the north.' The probability of this tradition receives some support from another, which relates that before leaving the house he traced the outline of his hand on a piece of board, in acknowledgment of the hospitality he had received and his indebtedness on account of it, and that this board was preserved in the family of Betton, who lived there for many generations, as a sort of talisman which secured to them the possession of the estate. The other local tradition alluded to is that which tells us that Owen Glyndwr watched the progress of the battle from the branches of an oak at Shelton on the other side of

[1] Wylie's *England under Henry IV.*, vol. i. p. 362.

the river; and observing that victory inclined to the forces of the king, withdrew his men to Oswestry and so back to Wales. The dead trunk of the oak still exists, about two miles from the town, but modern investigation has shown that there is no more truth in the tradition than vitality in the tree. Glyndwr was in Carmarthenshire more than a hundred miles away.[1]

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But we have a record of the battle of Shrewsbury more interesting even than the story of contemporary chroniclers, or the traditions of local families. It has been immortalised as few other battles have been by the genius of Shakespeare, and many to whom Shrewsbury is but a name and Hotspur little more than a myth, are familiar with the fight as a scene in his First Part of *Henry IV.* There the characters which are really historical live and move across the stage, each with his own characteristics; but the poet has added one that is fictitious, whom yet we remember best of all. For in the battle was there not, besides the king and Hotspur and Prince Hal and Douglas, the immortal knight, Sir John Falstaff? Did he not, by his own account, fight with Hotspur for a long hour by Shrewsbury clock? and did not

[1] Shropshire Archæol. Soc. *Transactions*, 3rd Series, vol. iii. p. 163.

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Prince Hal utter over him, as he lay pretending to be dead, the epitaph which we echo as we study him among the characters of the piece :—

'Poor Jack, farewell !
I could have better spared a better man' ?

Falstaff, with all his faults and misdemeanours, is the best-remembered hero of the fight.

The issues of the battle were of no small importance, not only to the king, but to the nation at large. To him it secured the stability of succession in his family for the generations which followed, but this was not the only result. There fell in the fight an unprecedented number of the nobility and gentry, with the result that a blow was struck at feudalism from which it never afterwards wholly recovered. It was, indeed, nothing less than the unity of the kingdom which was at stake, for the conference which Shakespeare has depicted,[1] whether it ever occurred as a scene or not, was the embodiment of a reality. It will be remembered that in the scene alluded to, Hotspur and his uncle Worcester, together with Glyndwr and Mortimer (who had been heir-presumptive of the crown from Richard II.) are repre-

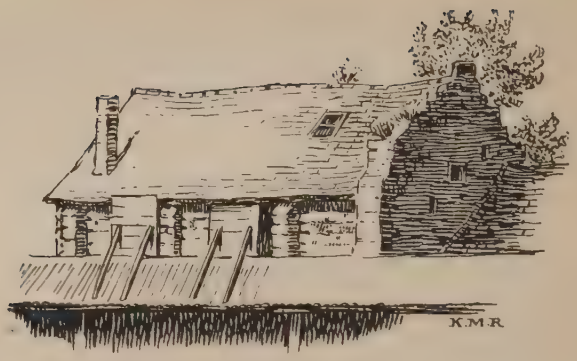
[1] *Henry IV.*, Part I., Act iii. sc. 1.

sented as sitting over a map of England in the archdeacon's house at Bangor, and proceeding to divide the kingdom among themselves. Mortimer says :—

'The Archdeacon hath divided it
Into three limits, very equally :
England, from Trent and Severn hitherto,
By south and east, is to my part assigned :
All westward, Wales beyond the Severn shore,
And all the fertile land within that bound,
To Owen Glendower : and, dear coz, to you [Hotspur]
The remnant northward, lying off from Trent.'

The battle of Shrewsbury averted such a dismemberment of the kingdom ; and so, although we may not claim for it the first rank among the decisive battles of history, it had issues of which the effects have not yet wholly passed away, and which amply justified the commemoration on a somewhat extensive scale of its five-hundredth anniversary in 1903.

Shrewsbury itself, of course, felt the immediate effects of the conflict. The dead body of Hotspur, after having been buried at Whitchurch on the night of the battle, was disinterred and exposed in the town at the High Cross, near to the present Post Office, until it was beheaded and quartered, and the



AUSTIN FRIARS

parts distributed to various cities. The Earl of Worcester was executed, and his headless body was buried—not, as used to be supposed, in St. Mary's—but in the church of the Abbey. Many of the knights and gentry on both sides who had fallen in the fight were brought for interment to the graveyards of the Friaries in the town, while the mass of less distinguished slain were laid in great pits upon the battlefield. Over these, in the course of a few years, under the patronage of the king rather than by any effort on his part (for he appears to have been willing only to give that which cost him nothing) there rose a college of priests, and a stately church, where continual prayers were to rise up for

the repose of those who had fallen in the fray. The buildings of the college have wholly disappeared, and their exact situation is a matter of conjecture, but the church has become the Parish Church of Battlefield, and while it still ministers to the spiritual wants of the little community around, its chancel and nave and stately tower witness to the continuity of English history both civil and ecclesiastical.

The Battle of Shrewsbury

After the battle of Shrewsbury there came another uneventful period in the history of the town, but the Wars of the Roses brought it again into a measure of prominence. There is no need for more than a passing allusion to the quarrels of those who aimed at ruling the kingdom during the long incapacity of Henry VI., but one of the nobles was well known in Shrewsbury, and showed it much favour. This was Richard, Duke of York, father of Edward IV. In the bailiffs' accounts are various disbursements on the occasions of his visits. He was there in 1446, and again in 1450 and 1451. In the last-mentioned year he sent a present of venison, and there appears an item of 24s. expended 'at the feast on the said venison in the presence of the bailiffs and other worthy men for the honour of the

town.' It may be mentioned in passing that in the accounts of the following year occurs a mention of another distinguished man connected with Shropshire by birth. The large sum of £6 13s. was given for services rendered to the burgesses by Sir John Talbot, knight. This was probably a son of the great Earl of Shrewsbury, though possibly it is he himself who is spoken of by his lesser title. This is suggested by the fact that his good offices were used with the king—anyway, the earl was now at the zenith of his fame, having distinguished himself as a general both in France and in Ireland. It was about this time that he was sent in command of an English force to recover Gascony, but he met his death the following year in the battle of Chatillon, near Bordeaux, his remains being sent for interment to Whitchurch, where his Shropshire property lay.

To return, however, to the Duke of York. His efforts to secure the goodwill of the burgesses of the town evidently met with success, for his popularity is attested by a memorial of him still to be seen in a niche of the old Market Hall in the Square. This is a statue of him which was removed from the old Welsh Bridge on its demolition

a century or more ago. The bailiffs' accounts speak of extensive repairs to the Welsh Bridge in the year 1458-9, and in all probability it was in connection with this work that his statue was placed in a prominent position over the gate which there gave admission to the town. He met with his death in 1460 at Wakefield, but his efforts on behalf of the house of York had not been in vain, and the next year his son succeeded to the throne as Edward IV.

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Edward was at the time of his father's death staying in Shrewsbury, and it was from thence he marched to Mortimer's Cross, near Ludlow, where he gained the decisive battle which set him on the throne. The place which he made his home in the town was the House of the Dominican Friars, and here, as already mentioned, a few years later his second and third sons were born: 'the which frears standethe under Sainct Mary's churche in the sayde towne estward.'[1] It will be remembered that his queen was widow of Earl Ferrers, and it may be mentioned in passing that the Shrewsbury records throw a sidelight on the favouritism which the king

[1] Taylor MS., Shropshire Archæol. Society's *Transactions*, 1st Series, vol. iii. p. 247.

showed to her belongings, and which was so much resented as to cause his temporary exile. In the bailiffs' accounts is a record under the year 1466-7 of wine given to Lord Ferrers (presumably the son of the queen by her first husband) at a feast which he attended with the bailiffs and other persons of quality, on the occasion of a reconciliation between Richard Stury, John Trentham, and John Hoord.

We must, however, hasten on. Every one is familiar with the events which followed the death of Edward IV. in 1483. His son Edward—a boy of twelve—was duly proclaimed his successor, but after a nominal reign of some three months he and his brother were murdered in the Tower, and his uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, usurped the throne as Richard III. Shrewsbury continued to receive signs of royal favour, but the king's efforts in this direction failed to overcome the general dislike of his usurpation, and when—in August 1485—the Earl of Richmond landed at Milford Haven to contest Richard's claim to the throne, it was to Shrewsbury that he first bent his steps. What occurred when he and his small army of followers reached the outskirts of the town is best told in the quaint words of the chronicle known as the

Taylor MS., still preserved in Shrewsbury School Library. The account is as follows, the spelling only being modernised: 'This year, in the month of August 1485, Henry, Earl of Richmond, came out of Brittany toward England with a small company, and landed at Milford Haven in Wales nigh Pembroke the seventh day of August, having help enough in England, and so marching forward being stayed at no place until he came to the town of Shrewsbury, where the gates were shut against him and the portcullis let down; so the said earl's messenger came to the gate, to say the Welsh gate, commanding them to open the gates to their right king: and Master Mytton made and swore, being head bailiff and a stout wise gentleman, saying that he knew him for no king but only King Richard, to whom he was sworn, whose life-tenants he and his fellows were, and before he should enter there he should go over his belly, meaning thereby that he would be slain to the ground and so to run over him before he entered; and that he protested vehemently upon the oath he had taken. So the said earl returned with his company back again to a village called Forton, three miles from Shrewsbury, where he lay that night; and in the morning follow-

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ing there came ambassadors to speak with the bailiffs, requesting to pass quietly, and that the earl, their master, did not mean to hurt the town nor none therein, but to go to try his right; and that he promised further that he would save his oath and him and his fellows harmless. Upon this they entered, and in passing through, the said Mytton lay along the ground and his belly upward; and so the said earl stept over him, and saved his oath; and so passing further, and marching forwards until he came to a village near unto Leicester called Bosworth, where he met King Richard and his enemies the 22nd of August, being Monday in the year above mentioned.'[1]

The result of the battle of Bosworth Field is well known. Richard was defeated and slain, and Henry was proclaimed king. Soon after, he married Elizabeth of York, and so by degrees Lancastrians and Yorkists laid aside their mutual animosity, and the land had rest. It only remains to add that the house in which Henry stayed on his way to Bosworth still remains, and is one of the finest specimens of half-timbered work which the town possesses. It is

[1] Shropshire Archæol. Society's *Transactions*, 1st Series, vol. iii. p. 249.

situated at the top of the Wyle Cop on the right-hand side looking down, and a few years ago one of the original windows was discovered under the plaster. This was restored, and an inscription at its base now calls attention to the historical event which is associated with the house.

HOUSE IN BUTCHER ROW

It was during the period of which we are now treating that there arose and was developed an institution of great importance to the town, though it had its headquarters at Ludlow. This was the Court of the Marches. After the rebellion of Robert de Belesme, it will be remembered, the earldom of Shrewsbury was suppressed by Henry I., and there grew up in its place a system of government by Lords Marchers. These exercised a more or less independent rule over the mixed population which inhabited the Welsh borderland, and often in the wars with the Principality they turned the scale to

one side or the other. Edward IV. was by descent a Lord Marcher, as shown by his title of Earl of March, and after his accession as king he made an effort to bring this unruly portion of his subjects into order by the creation of the Council of the Marches. Their work was first of all to see justice done by the Lords Marchers, but this soon developed into trying cases themselves.[1] The earliest presidents of the Council, with the doubtful exception of Lord Rivers, who is said to have been the first, were all ecclesiastics. Of these the most able administrator was Rowland Lee, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, who held office from 1534 to 1543, but the best-known of all the presidents is Sir Henry Sidney, who was appointed in 1560, and continued to fill the post till 1586. The president had his official residence at Ludlow Castle, but he and his court paid frequent visits to Shrewsbury, and here their official residence was the Council House, which had been formerly known as Lord's Place. We learn from the bailiffs' accounts that this was leased to the town under its new name by Richard Onslow in 1571 for a term of sixty years, and in 1583 it was granted for such term as the

[1] Miss Burne's *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, p. 626. Miss Skeel's *Council in the Marches*, *passim*.

bailiffs and burgesses had in it to Richard Barker, who was to keep it in repair and occupy it, except when required for the use of the Council on the occasions of their visits. When these occurred the town always did its utmost to show honour to the president, as appears from many entries in the accounts. For example, in 1580, the Lord President at his coming with the Council was to have half a tun of Gascony wine 'to pleasure them withal,' and similarly the next year a fat ox was to be given him. In 1583, a present of £10 was made to Lady Sidney, to be employed on 'such necessaries as should be for the worship of the town.' The original Council House appears to have been erected at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and was a mansion of considerable size. After the dissolution of the Council, however, in 1689, it fell into bad repair; and when at last it received attention it was converted into three dwelling-houses, and completely modernised, with the exception of what was the entrance-hall, in which the oak panelling still remains. One architectural gem, however, was fortunately left untouched, and that was the Gatehouse. This still invites attention, and deserves it. It is one of the houses which bears a date, viz. 1620, and the initials added go to

Court of the Marches

Shrewsbury

show that it owed its erection to one of the Owens of Condover, into whose hands at that time the property had lately passed.

OLD WELSH BRIDGE (FROM AN ENGRAVING)

COUNCIL·HOUSE·GATEWAY·

CHAPTER VI

MUNICIPAL LIFE—GILDS—COMMON COUNCIL

OLD GUILDHALL (FROM AN ENGRAVING)

THE growth of town life in mediæval times presents many points of interest, and Shrewsbury is no exception, but the space at our disposal will only permit allusion to some of the more salient points.[1] The idea of town as distinguished from country was familiar in Roman times, but the Saxon settlement was essentially that of village life.

> 'O'er the land is wrought
> The happy villagedom by English tribes
> From Elbe and Baltic brought.'[2]

[1] For the more general subject cf. Stubbs's *Constitutional History*, vol. i. pp. 458-484; Mrs. J. R. Green's *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century, passim*; Hibbert's *English Gilds, passim*.

[2] Palgrave's *Visions of England*, Prelude.

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Each little township with its stockaded 'burh,' where dwelt its principal man, its 'folkmoot,' in which the affairs of the community were discussed, and its ploughland, which they tilled in common, was independent of its neighbours. But in the nature of things trade brought changes, and so before the Saxon period came to a close some of these villages had attracted to themselves a considerable population as compared with others, and the problems of the administration of justice on a large scale and the regulation of trade began to require consideration. The Norman invasion gave a great stimulus to town life. The castles of the feudal lords, and in a somewhat less degree the great religious houses, attracted men to live in their neighbourhood or to visit them from time to time for purposes of business. It was in this way that in Shrewsbury the 'Castle Foregate' and the 'Abbey Foregate' grew to be populous parts of the community. But Shrewsbury rose into importance as a town, not only from these general causes, but from two special ones which arose out of its situation. These were of opposite character: the one had its origin in war, the other in peace. So long as the wild Welsh were turbulent and unsubdued neighbours, Shrewsbury was from its position a

rallying-point for the English forces, and a centre from which Welsh insubordination could be kept in check. On the other hand, when war yielded to peace, hostile raids gave place to visits for purposes of trade; and especially a business in Welsh cloth sprang up, which for generations poured wealth into the coffers of its merchants. Gilds

The first step in the organisation of a mediæval town as a separate unit was usually the formation of a Merchants' Gild (*gilda mercatoria*). This was a society in which were enrolled the inhabitants who carried on trades of various kinds, together with a smaller number of others who did not live within the town limits, but by ownership or otherwise were connected with it. The original purpose of this gild appears to have been the regulation of trade, and the defence of the trade interests of the town against outsiders. But as the gild merchants necessarily embraced all the men of most influence in the town, there naturally fell into their hands the maintenance not merely of business rules but of law and order in general. And so it is often difficult to distinguish between the gild and the civil authority (*communa*). The fact appears to be that they were two different bodies theoretically, but inasmuch as the *personnel*

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was the same, it is not always easy to see in which capacity the members were acting. In many instances a town originally derived its status as such from the will of the baron on whose manor it was situated, but in any case when it was organised to the point just mentioned, the further step followed of obtaining from the king or other lord paramount such additional privileges as appeared necessary to secure its liberties and improve its position; hence the number of charters which mediæval towns secured for themselves. Shrewsbury possesses an almost complete series, more than forty in number, dating from the reign of Richard I. to that of James II., and a still earlier one of Henry II. is alluded to in the first granted by John. This last-mentioned king conferred three which are still extant, and a record exists of two more. The third of those from him which have come down to us, granted in 1205, is of importance from the light which it throws on Shrewsbury as a border town with a mixed population. It grants among other privileges the holding of a fair, and then provides that the lands and tenements shall be regulated '*per legem Bretollie et legem baronye et legem Anglescherye.*' The first law referred to was for a long time a difficulty, the historians Owen and

Blakeway interpreting it as the law of Bristol; but Bretollia is now generally allowed to be Breteuil, one of the Norman fiefs of the Conqueror's friend Fitz-Osbern, which had become a model for the creation of towns on English soil, especially in the Welsh Marches.[1] Its law seems to have had for its object the attraction of outside traders, and so it secured such traders from exaction on the part of the lord whose castle they supplied with various commodities; and it may have been in connection with this that the suburb of Frankwell (Frankville) grew up at Shrewsbury immediately across the river on the side nearest the castle, and that its inhabitants were mainly burgesses who had come over from France, and who formed a colony of themselves under their own customs. The law of barony was intended to secure even-handed justice and protection from the danger of oppression. The essential privilege of a baron—which in John's reign had not yet crystallised into the title of the member of a particular class[2]—was trial only by his equals, and the charter apparently conferred this privilege on all the burgesses. The 'lex

Gilds

[1] Cf. Miss Bateson's *Mediæval England*, p. 124; Morris's *Welsh Wars of Edward I.*, p. 4.

[2] Taswell-Langmead, *English Constitutional History* (fourth edition), p. 136; Stubbs's *Constitutional History*, vol. ii. p. 198.

Anglescherye' marks it off as a border town. In the country of the marches there were districts of Englishry (Anglescheria) and districts of Welshry (Walcheria); the former governed by English law, the latter by special laws and customs under local chieftains; and when the charter promised that lands and tenements should be dealt with by the law of Englishry, it was equivalent to the promise that the inhabitants of the town should have their affairs regulated by the law of the realm and not by the wilder and more uncertain Welsh law, which prevailed in many parts of the neighbouring marches.[1]

Henry III. during his long reign was specially liberal in granting charters to Shrewsbury; and the first of the series, conferred in 1227, is of particular interest from the light which it throws on the processes, already alluded to, by which a mediæval town grew in trade and importance. Having confirmed the privileges granted by the charter of John, just alluded to, it grants additional privileges, among which it secures the burgesses from interference on the part of the sheriff of the county. It then goes

[1] Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, vol. xii. pp. 173 and 210. A friend has suggested that the 'lex baroniæ' specially applied to the burgesses of the town proper, the 'lex Bretolliæ' to those in the suburbs, and the 'lex Angleschericæ' to those in the liberties.

on to permit the said burgesses to have a merchant gild with the customs and liberties thereto belonging, and no one who did not belong to the said gild was to trade in the town without the consent of the said burgesses. We know, however, from other sources that this was not the creation of a new gild, but the recognition of one already existing; for an extant roll containing a list of members dates from 1209, and its wording implies that the gild not only possessed members then but had been in existence a generation before.[1] Gilds

Successive charters, however, from outside only marked the stages of development within the town itself, and one of the first was the adding to the merchant gild the separate gilds of the various crafts. As commerce increased there were many trade details which could not be dealt with by the central body, and so by degrees each craft had its own organisation for regulating matters which concerned its own trade. With regard to the earlier history of all these gilds two things should be remarked. One is that their object was not the selfish idea of securing the interests of the workers at the expense of those who represented capital,

[1] Shropshire Archæol. Soc. *Transactions*, 2nd Ser., vol. viii. p. 21.

OLD HOUSES IN FRANKWELL

but that of securing the interests of the craft as a whole by using every possible means to shut out bad work, and so promoting the welfare of the town generally. Accordingly, one of the officers of a gild was the searcher, whose duty was to see that proper materials were used and proper tools employed, and that nothing was done contrary to the rules of the gild. The other noticeable feature is the close connection between these gilds and religion. Each had its patron saint, and the more important ones maintained their chaplain to minister at their special

altar in one of the parish churches. The Drapers Gilds had their chapel in St. Mary's, the Shearmen in St. Julian's, and so on. It was a part of a gildman's duty to entreat the Divine blessing on the pursuit in which he was engaged; and when the festival of Corpus Christi came round, every member of every gild endeavoured to be in his place in the procession, the object of which was to do honour to the highest religious mystery.

Unfortunately this high level of aim was not very long maintained either as regards work or religious association, and in spite of the foundation of gilds like that of St. Winifred, established in connection with the Abbey in 1486 for more definitely religious purposes, deterioration gradually undermined their influence. Indeed, their past association with religious rites helped to bring about their ruin, for in the Protestant reaction of Edward VI.'s reign it was proposed to confiscate the property of gilds along with that of chantries. The opposition was so strong that the proposal was not carried out as regards their purely secular property, but they so far suffered that their means of usefulness to the poor was largely crippled, and their prestige and authority were lessened. It is true that new trade companies were

formed, but their principle was different. The tie of brotherhood and the appeal to high motive were weakened, and the thought of mere money-making became predominant; and so, although material prosperity flourished and increased, the result was not all gain. No doubt much of the change was inevitable. Mediæval ideas had played their part and done their work and so passed away, but as we look back calmly on the upheaval of the sixteenth century, while we are thankful for the light and liberty it brought with it, we may well regret the motives that were too often at work, and the want of proportion in choosing what should be destroyed and what might with advantage be retained.

Meanwhile, during the centuries covered by the gilds, the purely civil and municipal authority had been more and more taking shape as an independent organisation.

King John in his second charter, which was granted in the first year of his reign, sanctioned the formation of a 'common council' of the town, one of whose privileges was the election by the burgesses of two of their number who should well and faithfully discharge the duties belonging to the office of provost, and not be removable except by

the common council. This was apparently the first appointment, or at any rate the first recognition, of this corporate body in Shrewsbury. From this period we have a fairly complete list of those who filled the chief office in the town, first as provosts, then from 1294 as bailiffs, and finally from 1638 as mayors. Common Council

The municipality took considerable time in arriving at the form with which we are familiar, but the most important changes occurred about the close of the fourteenth century. In 1380 the town was in great disorder, and to rectify the abuses which existed and which appear to have partly arisen from the visitation of the plague known as the Black Death some thirty years before, it was agreed to return to the form of government which prevailed before the plague. Twelve men were accordingly chosen to manage affairs and elect the two bailiffs. This lasted till 1389, when it was agreed, in view of the disorder which still existed, that the bailiffs should nominate a council of twenty-five, with various officers to attend to special duties. In 1433 additional powers were conferred on this council, but the rights of the general body of burgesses were affirmed, and in particular the bailiffs and commons were to elect twelve worthy men to act during life

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as assistants to the bailiffs. In 1444 these twelve assistants received the name of aldermen, and the common council was appointed to act for the whole body of burgesses, with some modification in their mode of election. From this period there were no changes of special importance until Charles I., in 1638, granted the town a new charter by which a mayor was substituted for two bailiffs and the number of aldermen was raised to twenty-four, with forty-eight assistants or common councilmen. Since the Municipal Act of 1835, the Corporation has consisted of a mayor, ten aldermen, and thirty councillors elected by the various wards of the town; the old burgess rights have practically all been abolished.

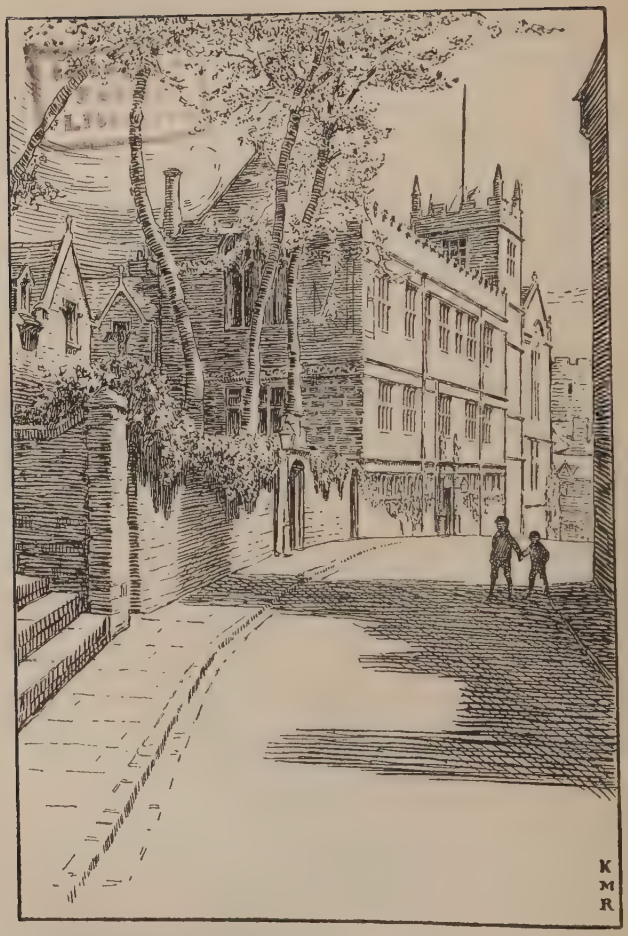
The insignia of the Corporation are of considerable interest. The following are old: three serjeant's maces of silver, less than eighteen inches in length, a marshal's staff, and two swords of state. Of the three old maces, one possibly dates from the reign of Henry VIII., one, supposed to have been carried before the mayoress, dates from the reign of Elizabeth, and the third from that of Charles I. The head of the marshal's staff probably belongs to 1669, which is also the date of the sword of state now in use. The other is possibly a little older,

but its history is somewhat doubtful. To these must be added the town seal which is round, and rather more than three inches in diameter. The device upon it evidently represents the town of Shrewsbury, and the legend round it proclaims that it was made in the year 1425.

Of the more modern Corporation plate, a silver tankard, now used as a loving-cup, was presented by Lord Clive in 1760; of the rest nothing bears an earlier date than 1820, and though several of these later articles are of great value and interest in themselves, they do not fall within the purview of this book.[1]

[1] A full description will be found in Shropshire Archæol. Society's *Transactions*, 2nd Series, vol. x. p. 148 (Exhibition Part).

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S ARMS ON THE OLD MARKET HALL



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CHAPTER VII

THE REFORMATION PERIOD—SHREWSBURY SCHOOL

THE DRAPERS' HALL

SHREWSBURY School, like many others, was the product of the Reformation, and must be viewed in connection with that movement. And it must also be remembered that the Reformation was no sudden movement, but one which had been slowly maturing for several generations. It was the outcome of many causes, intellectual and political as well as religious, and in estimating it, all

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these must be taken into account. Shrewsbury felt the wave as early as 1407, when a priest named William Thorpe in St. Chad's Church denounced from the pulpit some of the corruptions of the Church of Rome. Lollardry, of which Thorpe was a disciple, seems to have had a considerable number of adherents in the southern part of the county, but it met with small encouragement at the time in Shrewsbury; for, as the result of his sermon, Thorpe found himself in prison, and a few months later had to answer, before the Archbishop of Canterbury, a charge preferred by the bailiffs and council of the town. He seems to have defended himself with moderation, and to have been ultimately released. For the next century there is no record of religious disturbance, but all the time the light of the New Learning was spreading and growing, and, as it grew, men more and more demanded the right to think for themselves — more and more felt after liberty of mind and soul as well as of body. The Reformation had become inevitable and was only waiting for circumstances to give it shape, when Henry VIII. came to the throne. His brother Arthur, the eldest son of Henry VII., had been a familiar figure to Salopians. In connection with

the Council of the Marches he had kept court at Ludlow Castle with his wife Katharine of Aragon, but had died within a few months of his marriage. This had been a grief to Henry VII. for several reasons, not the least being the fact that Katharine had brought with her a large dowry which he was unwilling to lose. He accordingly, on the death of Arthur, betrothed the widow to his younger son Henry, who was then a boy of eleven. In 1509 the king died and Henry succeeded, his accession being soon followed by his marriage to Katharine. But Henry VIII. was by nature headstrong and impatient of control—a man of strong passions in every direction—and the time came when the solemn Katharine, who was six years his senior, could not stand in rivalry with the young and sprightly Anne Boleyn. The king accordingly developed scruples as to his having done right in marrying his brother's widow, and when the Pope refused to sanction a divorce, Henry threw off his allegiance to the Papal See.

As far as Henry VIII. was concerned the Reformation was almost absolutely political and personal, rather than religious. The consequences, however, to the country and to religion were great, and Shrewsbury was directly affected by two of the

acts of his reign. The first and most important was the Dissolution of the Monasteries. This was effected as regards the lesser houses, whose income was under £200 a year, in 1536, and as regards the larger, three years later. Whatever opinion may be held as to the monastic system as such, posterity is agreed that this was an act of spoliation which nothing could justify; and as its result a vast amount of property intended for religious uses passed into private hands, to the crippling of the Church's usefulness. In Shrewsbury the colleges of St. Chad and St. Mary and the Friaries were first despoiled, and then the rich foundation of the Abbey afforded a specially welcome piece of plunder for the royal favourites. The other act of Henry's reign affected the town more remotely, and has only borne fruit in recent years. In 1534 the king was empowered by Parliament to appoint suffragan bishops, and among the places for which they might be appointed was Shrewsbury. Accordingly in 1537 a Bishop of Shrewsbury was chosen in the person of Lewis Thomas, who had been Abbot of Cwmhir, but he does not appear to have specially associated himself with the town, though according to tradition the old inn, the 'String of Horses,' in Frankwell was his

house. At his death the Act fell into abeyance until it was revived in the year 1888.

Henry VIII. died in 1547, and was succeeded by his son Edward VI., a boy of nine. This fact necessarily threw the management of affairs into the hands of others, with the result that legislation took two opposite directions. The Reformed Faith was strengthened by the two editions of the English Prayer Book which, as consolidated in Elizabeth's time, became practically the Liturgy of the Church of England till this day, but alongside of this the courtiers who surrounded the young king made their Protestant zeal an excuse for greed which went beyond even that of his father. Two commissions were appointed to inquire as to what still remained to the churches in the shape of sacred vessels and costly vestments, and these were sold, not for the benefit of religion, but nominally for the king's treasury, and really for the pockets of the great nobles. The lists of these church goods which have come down to us show not only the amount of this wanton spoliation, but also throw light on the extent to which, in the ages before, worshippers had given of their possessions to enrich the churches of God throughout the land. Each of the old churches of Shrewsbury was well furnished

with all the accessories of a stately worship, but by the time the king's commissioners had fulfilled their office, only a small portion of these accessories remained for sacred uses; they and their emissaries were only too ready to 'break down all the carved work thereof with axes and hammers.'[1]

It is beyond the scope of this book to trace the progress of the Reformation to its completion, through the Roman reaction under Mary and the final throwing off of the Papal allegiance under Elizabeth, but the general attitude of the town during this unsettled and trying period is very noteworthy. As far as can be traced there was an entire absence of that persecuting spirit, which was conspicuous in many other places, and which was confined to neither party. It is recorded that in the first year of Edward's reign certain pictures from St. Mary's and St. Chad's were publicly burnt in the market-place, but burning was confined to such inanimate objects, and even this seems to have been ordered from outside. The best proof, however, of the good feeling which prevailed all through the Reformation period is to be found in the few changes which took place among the clergy. At Holy Cross (the Abbey), William Hordley was

[1] Ps. lxxiv. 7.

vicar from 1530 to 1558—that is, from the middle of Henry VIII.'s reign till the end of Mary's. At St. Alkmund's, George Crane was vicar from 1550 till his death in 1591—that is, from the middle of Edward VI.'s reign till the thirty-third year of Elizabeth's. With regard to St. Mary's and St. Julian's the record is incomplete and uncertain, but in the former case John Lane is mentioned as holding office under both Mary and Elizabeth. Only in the case of St. Chad's does there appear to have been any removal of vicars to suit the changing opinions of those in high places; in the other four churches, the incumbents seem to have gone on quietly fulfilling the duties of their office without molestation from outside, and without hatred or ill-will on the part of their fellow-townsmen.

Reformation Period: Shrewsbury School

With regard to the school, it may be remembered that when it was first announced that the Abbey was about to be suppressed by Henry VIII., the burgesses of the town presented a petition that the buildings might be utilised as a place of reception for distinguished visitors; and when this met with no success, they made request the year following that the king would 'erect the house of the late Abbey into a college or free school.' This request also was

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rejected, but the idea took possession of the minds of the townspeople, and soon after the accession of Edward VI. it bore fruit. Shrewsbury was not included in the original list of towns in which the king's commissioners proposed to establish grammar-schools, but the burgesses took up the matter warmly, and at their petition, supported by the neighbouring county, the king granted a charter in 1552 for the foundation of a school in Shrewsbury, to be called the Free Grammar School of King Edward VI., and to be endowed with a portion of the tithes which had lately belonged to the suppressed colleges of St. Mary and St. Chad. The Corporation had already expended the sum of £20 on a suitable building.

For the first ten years the school had but a troubled existence, owing to various causes, but in 1561 Thomas Ashton was appointed headmaster, and he was virtually the maker of the school. At the time of his appointment he was Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and had possibly come into the neighbourhood as tutor to the sons of Sir Andrew Corbet of Moreton Corbet. Soon after his appointment he had under him as many as two hundred and sixty-six boys, equally divided between inhabitants of the town and those from outside, and this number must have

considerably increased in the years following. Among his pupils were many belonging to the principal families of Shropshire and the neighbouring counties, and several attained to considerable distinction in various capacities, military and civil; but the best known of them was Sir Philip Sidney, who was entered at the school on October 17th, 1564, the same day on which his cousin, Fulke Greville, was also entered. It has been already mentioned that Sir Henry Sidney was at this time President of the Court of the Marches, and from his residence at Ludlow, as well as from frequent visits to Shrewsbury, he had many opportunities of becoming acquainted with Ashton's capacity and the reputation of the school. His son Philip was a boy of ten at the time of entry, and he remained at the school three years, after which he proceeded to Christ Church, Oxford. The rest of his short career is well known. During his travels on the Continent, which followed his university life, he was present at Paris during the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and at Venice made the acquaintance of Tintoretto and Paul Veronese. On his return home he spent some time at court, but gave offence to Elizabeth by defending his father's policy while Governor of Ireland, and

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opposing her proposed marriage with the Duke of Anjou. In 1586 he joined as a volunteer in an attack on a Spanish convoy sent for the relief of the Dutch town of Zutphen, and here he received a wound from which he died a few days afterwards. His chivalrous and romantic character is well illustrated by the familiar anecdote that, as he lay wounded, water was brought to him, but seeing a private soldier cast longing eyes on it, he passed the water on to him with the remark, 'Thy necessity is greater than mine.' Sir Philip Sidney's reputation, however, rests chiefly on his relation to literature. Young as he was, he was recognised by his contemporaries as standing at the head of the writers of his day. He enjoyed the friendship of Spenser, who dedicated to him his *Shepherds' Calendar*; a similar tribute was paid to him by Hakluyt's dedication of his *Voyages*; and when death brought the promise of his career to a sudden close, nearly every poet of the time joined in writing elegies on the loss which the world had sustained. His own best-known work is the *Arcadia*, written for the amusement of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, but not printed till after his death. Its medley of prose romance and pastoral poetry does not much appeal to modern

readers, but this, and perhaps even more his sonnets in *Astrophel and Stella*, will always attract the attention of students. His cousin and schoolfellow, Sir Fulke Greville, afterwards Lord Brooke, remained his friend through life, and shared many of his literary aspirations. Greville had himself a distinguished political career, filling among other offices that of Secretary for Wales, and he was the friend of Bacon, Camden, and others distinguished in literature. He himself wrote a *Life* of Sidney, one of whose pall-bearers he was at the funeral in St. Paul's; and at length, in 1628, he met a somewhat similar death, being stabbed by his servant, and dying of the wound a few days after.

Ashton lived till 1578, but for the last seven or eight years of his life he gave up the charge of the school to others; and among the Corporation documents is a letter of his to the bailiffs asking their consent to this arrangement, and—in very prolix language—commending the school to their care. He did not, however, cease to take interest in the school, and used his influence with those in high places to secure a considerable increase of its endowments, and also to shape the ordinances by which it should be governed. Within a fortnight of his death

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he paid a visit to Shrewsbury, where he preached at St. Mary's Church, and set his seal to the indenture by which the Corporation of the town, the Master and Fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge, the Bishop of Lichfield, the then headmaster, Thomas Lawrence, and himself gave their formal consent to the new ordinances. One other characteristic of Ashton must be mentioned. He was a great organiser of dramatic performances, and did his best to imbue his pupils with the same spirit. In the Taylor MS., which is preserved in the School Library, and also in the poems of his contemporary, Thomas Churchyard, there are several allusions to plays acted by them in the Quarry, and, at least on one occasion, Queen Elizabeth started with the intention of seeing 'Mr. Aston's play,' but at Coventry found it was already brought to a close.

Ashton was succeeded in the headmastership by Thomas Lawrence, who held the office till 1583, when he retired. He seems to have been as fond of pageants as his predecessor had been of dramatic performances, and an elaborate account still exists of a great display, in May 1581, to do honour to Sir Henry Sidney on the occasion of his spending St. George's Day in the town. A high tribute is

paid to Lawrence in the letter from the bailiffs to the Master and Fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge, announcing his resignation. 'His care and diligence had been such that the school had not only yielded a great number of good scholars, but also was the special ornament of the town, and was left in such good order that all gentlemen of those parts were very desirous to have their children trained up in it, whereby the number of scholars daily increased.'

Lawrence was succeeded by John Meighen, who held the headmastership for more than fifty years, from 1583 to 1635. During his time the school buildings, which now form the Free Library and Museum, were erected. The previous school buildings were no doubt half-timbered structures, of which the gable still standing in School Lane may have formed a portion, but they were now for the most part taken down and replaced by the present structure of 'freestone.' The building first undertaken was the Library, commenced in 1595, but not completed till 1617. The ground floor of this building was the Chapel, consecrated in the year just mentioned. This forms the Reading Room, as now used. Over it was the Library, now occupied by the Natural

ENTRANCE TO FREE LIBRARY

History Museum, and over this again were dormitories for the boys. These, however, in which the accommodation must have been of the scantiest, were removed in 1815. The other portion of the buildings—at right angles to that already mentioned—was begun in 1627 and finished in 1630. It contained the principal schoolroom known as Top Schools, now occupied by the Archæological Museum, and class-rooms which now form the Reference and

Circulating Libraries. The architecture is characteristic of the seventeenth century, with the usual mixture of Classic and Gothic details to be found in buildings of the later Renaissance. The entrance gateway is worthy of special notice. Above the Corinthian columns which flank the arch, are two figures in the costume of the period. The one on the left represents a boy, and under him in Greek characters is the word Philomathes. The one on the right is rather taller, and represents a more advanced student, and under him is the word Polymathes. Between them are the Greek words which complete a quotation from Isocrates, and gave excellent advice to the boys who daily passed beneath. 'If thou art a lover of learning (Philomathes), thou wilt become very learned (Polymathes).' In connection with this, the story is told that the bailiffs then in office wished their own initials to take the place of the Greek inscription; but Meighen was at feud with the town authorities at the time, and so relegated the initials to a small building devoted to much more ignoble uses, which stood near at hand.

Reformation Period: Shrewsbury School

These feuds with the town authorities became the bane of the school for the next hundred and fifty years. Whenever any of the Foundation Master-

ships fell vacant, there was almost invariably a dispute as to the new appointment, and at different times large sums of money were spent in lawsuits on the subject between the bailiffs of the town and the Master and Fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge.

It is impossible here to follow out the story of the school in detail,[1] interesting as much of it is, but some notice must be taken of Meighen's successor, Thomas Chaloner, who raised the school again to a high pitch of renown, but whose personal career was full of incident and misfortune. Born near Oswestry, he had been educated at the school, and had a great reputation for learning. But he was a staunch Royalist, and the times were troublous. He was appointed in 1637, just when the Parliamentary party was beginning to feel its power and was entering on more active opposition to the king. He began his work brilliantly, the number of new boys admitted during the first four years being unusually large; but after that, civil discord worked mischief in the school as elsewhere. Chaloner was a man of social habits, and in his meetings with his friends in the evening at one or

[1] For further particulars, cf. Fisher's *Annals of Shrewsbury School*, and *History of Shrewsbury School* (Adnitt and Naunton, Shrewsbury).

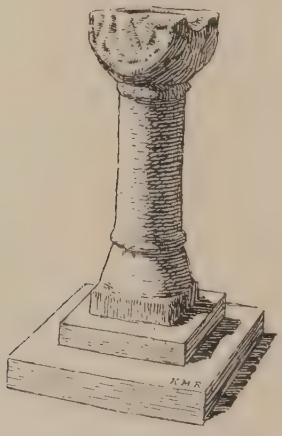
other of the taverns, which were then the resort of all the influential men of the town, he no doubt spoke his mind freely as to the Puritan party; and this was remembered against him when the opportunity came. King Charles visited the town in 1642, and on that occasion the headmaster put the school premises at the disposal of those who accompanied him. In the beginning of 1645, however, the town passed into the hands of the Parliament, and soon after, Chaloner was summarily ejected from his office and left to find a home where he could. Fortunately his talents as a teacher stood him in stead, and he undertook the charge of various schools in the county, which never failed to flourish under his charge. But his enemies continued their persecution, and his life was a series of compulsory migrations, which lasted all through the Puritan *régime*. At length came the Restoration, and in 1662 the old man—after an exile of nearly twenty years—was reinstated in his office as headmaster. But the Shrewsbury of his early days was no more—his old companions were departed—he himself was changed; and after about two years he found in the grave that rest which had been denied him in life. A very vivid picture of him survives in the memo-

randa—mostly in Latin—which he jotted down in the margin of the school registers, which he took with him at his ejection. The school had now entered on a period of decline, a state of things which was inevitable when every vacancy brought with it a dispute, and when it was by no means certain that a master would be chosen wholly from considerations of his fitness for the post. For the records of the school during the first half of the eighteenth century, we are indebted to the memoranda of a master who was even more fond of leaving records in writing than Chaloner. This was Leonard Hotchkis, who had entered the school as third master in 1713, became second master in 1728, and was promoted to the headmastership in 1735. When he resigned in 1754 at the age of nearly eighty, the school was at a very low ebb. In spite of a few brilliant scholars which it still produced at intervals, this state of things went on till the close of the century. In 1798, however, things had come to such a pass that drastic measures were felt to be necessary by all the parties concerned. By mutual consent an Act was passed in which the question of the disputed patronage was finally settled; by it the Corporation gave up

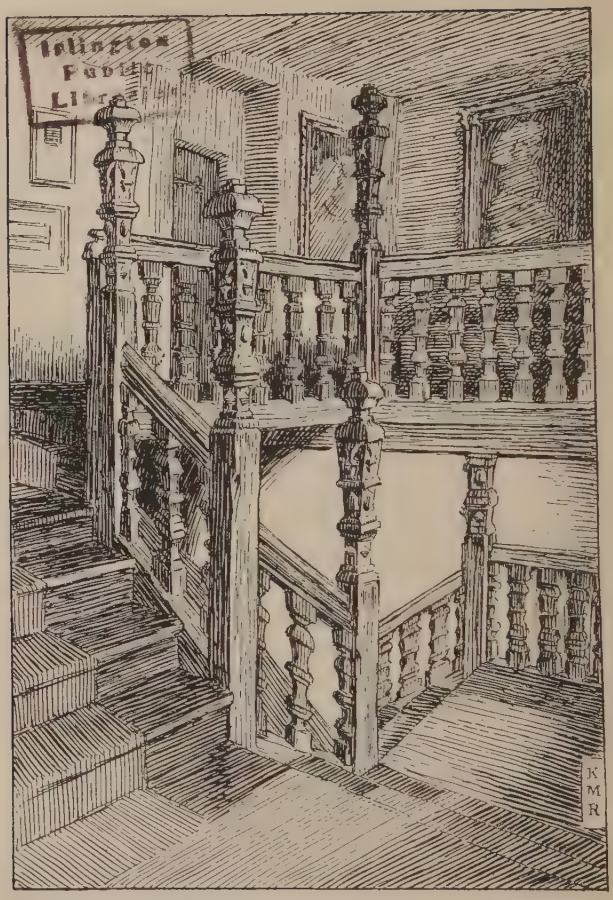
their claim, and the election of the head and second masters was left entirely in the hands of St. John's College, Cambridge. The masters then holding office resigned on pensions, Samuel Butler was appointed head, and a new era began. It is beyond the scope of this work to speak of the revival begun by Butler and maintained by his successors. The School Honour Boards and the records of University distinctions are sufficient proof that Shrewsbury has lost none of its ancient prestige as one of the great public schools of the land. In 1882, however, it was moved across the Severn to Kingsland, one of the finest sites for the purpose in England, and the old buildings were purchased by subscription for a Free Library and Museum. They thus continue to serve a purpose cognate with that for which they were originally built, and there is

BISHOP BUTLER'S MONUMENT IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH

now to be seen in front of them the statue of the most distinguished *alumnus* of modern times, Charles Darwin. As to the school itself, the removal has served in some respects to sever its close connection with the town; but this has been in many ways a gain, and, sound at heart in itself, it may be trusted to continue its usefulness for generations still future in the spirit of its motto, '*Intus si recte, ne labora.*'



HOLY WATER STOUP IN THE ABBEY



OLD STAIRCASE

In House where Prince Rupert stayed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY—THE CIVIL WAR AND COMMONWEALTH

OLD INN IN FRANKWELL, THE 'STRING OF HORSES'

WHEN Queen Elizabeth died in March 1603, and was succeeded by James I., it was not merely a change from the Tudor dynasty to that of the Stuarts, but it was a change from a strong and capable rule to one that was hesitating and incapable. The result was that forces and tendencies which had been silently working during the Tudor period, and to which their rule had unconsciously even given support, now asserted themselves. These forces and tendencies the Stuarts

Shrewsbury

could neither control nor understand. They were indeed singularly wanting in that quality of tact, which is perhaps nowhere more necessary than in the occupant of a throne. The Tudors, with all their tendency to tyranny, understood their people and knew when to stop; the Stuarts never learnt this lesson, and persistently did even the right thing in the wrong way. Both families had equally high views of the royal prerogative, but the Stuarts failed to comprehend the change which had come over the nation, and this failure brought catastrophe to themselves and a time of sore trial to their subjects. Charles I. succeeded his father in March 1625, and it was not long before the struggle between king and people began to show itself. The king wanted money, and attempted to raise it by unconstitutional means; the House of Commons resisted this infringement of their rights, and pressed for the security of liberty. And so the cleavage went on increasing and widening, until it found its issue in civil war.

There were many elements which went to make up the strife, social and religious quite as much as political; and looking back over the two centuries and more which have elapsed, we can understand how there were many who, in the earlier stages at

Islington Public Library

least, hesitated as to which side to join. The backbone, however, of the king's party lay in the country squires, supported by the peasantry; that of the Parliament lay in the middle classes, on whom Puritanism had taken its firmest hold.[1] It has been pointed out that, making due allowance for exceptions, the king's support was mainly derived from the country which lay to the west, and the Parliament's from that which lay to the east, of a line drawn from Scarborough to Southampton; and those whose lot it has been to live for any length of time on each side of this line will appreciate its correctness. They will understand also how the line of demarcation became so largely one of religion. For as time went on, social and political feeling more and more gave way to religious. Cromwell and his Ironsides knew their own minds, whatever might be the case with others, and it was Puritanism which eventually won the day.

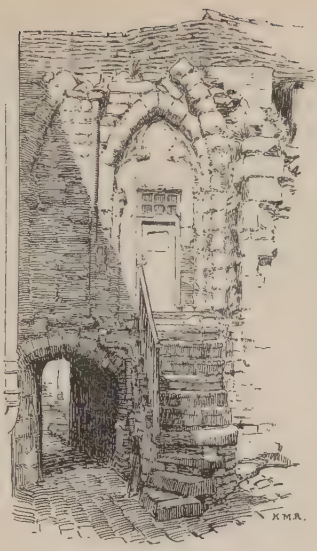
The royal standard was set up at Nottingham in August 1642, and this was followed by the garrisoning of towns and country houses for King or Parliament, as the case might be. As was to be expected from what has been said above, Shropshire as a whole

[1] *Social England*, vol. iv. p. 223.

Shrewsbury

sympathised with the royal cause, and Shrewsbury shared this sympathy. A few years before—in 1638—Charles had expressed his sense of the loyalty of the town by granting them a new charter, and when the war broke out, it is clear that the king calculated on the town taking his side. Before he left Nottingham he had directed the taking of a troop of foot-soldiers to Shrewsbury, 'where I doubt not you will be well received,' and he himself followed. Having slept the previous night at Wellington, he entered Shrewsbury on September 20th, 1642, 'all the people shouting with great joy,' and took up his quarters at the Council House. After a stay of two days, however, he went to Chester where the Parliamentary emissaries had been busy, but he returned on the 27th. The next day he received a deputation of the principal men of the county, and his address to them throws considerable light on the state of affairs. He complimented them on their loyalty, expressing his satisfaction that the insolences and misfortunes which drove him about his kingdom had brought him to so good and faithful a part of it; he expressed the hope that they would not suffer by the excesses of his soldiers, whom he would do his best to restrain; and then he informed them that he had sent for a

mint, to which he was prepared to devote all his own plate and other possessions; and conjured them not to be less liberal in their contributions for the preservation of the Commonwealth than others had been for its destruction. On the Sunday of his stay he 'took a protestation and the Sacrament upon it in St. Mary's Church to defend the true Protestant religion,' and on the following Tuesday left for Oxford. The mint in question was brought from Aberystwith the following month and duly set up in Shrewsbury, where it continued to be worked till the commencement of the next year, when it was removed to Oxford. In the two months or so during which it was at work in Shrewsbury comparatively few coins were struck, so that specimens are now rare; but the British Museum contains specimens of most of



BENNETT'S HALL (MINT)

Shrewsbury

them.[1] According to tradition the mint was set up in a building at the bottom of Pride Hill, behind what is now a confectioner's shop. The building itself is clearly of much earlier date, and was probably the house mentioned in the fourteenth century as Bennett's Hall, but there is nothing to disprove the tradition that the mint was located there during its temporary stay in the town. The silver which formed the material for the Shrewsbury coinage was partly the private plate belonging to the king, partly that derived from the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, and partly that of gentry belonging to the county. Many of these also presented to his Majesty considerable sums of money, and among other contributions before he left was a loan from the school-chest of £600, which he duly acknowledged in a letter addressed to his 'trusty and well-beloved Richard Gibbons, late mayor of the town, and Thomas Chaloner, schoolmaster of the Free School.' He promised that he would cause the same to be truly repaid whensoever they should demand the same, and he would always remember the loan as a very acceptable service to him. It is unnecessary

[1] For engravings of them cf. Shropshire Archæol. Society's *Transactions*, 2nd Series, vol. x. p. 268.

to say that this promise of repayment was never fulfilled, and during the Puritan ascendency a suit was instituted against those who had been concerned in lending the money, but it was eventually abandoned.

Both before and after the king's visit, the authorities of the town gave attention to the fortifications. In 1641 the gates were ordered to be repaired and firearms to be bought, and towards the close of the year following provision was made for further repairs and for the procuring of additional cannon. When the king left, he committed the military charge to Francis Ottley of Pitchford,[1] whom he created a knight and appointed 'Captain for the Town,' but this title was shortly afterwards changed to that of 'Governor.' It was no easy task which Sir Francis undertook, but he used his utmost endeavours to fulfil it faithfully. He insisted on a strong protestation of loyalty from the inhabitants, in which they declared that 'without any mental reservation' they detested and abhorred the notorious rebellion which went under the name of the Parliament Army, and

[1] Great light is thrown on the period by the 'Ottley Papers,' printed in vols. vi. vii. and viii. of the Shropshire Archæol. Society's *Transactions*, 2nd Series.

would with their whole force and means withstand it; and by his vigilance, backed by his military authority, he was able to reduce to silence those who sympathised with the other side. Two difficulties, however, constantly stood in his way. One arose from the want of discipline among the king's soldiers, and the other—closely connected with it—arose from the want of money. The soldiers, whose pay was in arrear, took every opportunity of plundering both friends and foes, and the heavy assessments made to raise means to carry on the war caused much distress as well as discontent. The correspondence of the period as well as the orders of the Corporation are full of allusions to both these sources of trouble. The following among these Corporation orders referring especially to the defence of the town will serve to show this:—'That a petition be preferred to show the weak estate of the town, and to desire a week longer to raise the money for his Majesty's necessity.' 'Ordered that £200, according to the king's special command, be raised by assessment on burgesses and inhabitants for repair of the castle and walls.' 'Forty men ordered to watch every night at such places as Mr. Mayor and Sir Francis Ottley shall appoint.' 'Ordered that the Mayor, Sir Francis Ottley, and

others do raise 50 Dragooners or more for defence of the king's person, and of this town and county.' 'That a "tun" weight of bullets be provided, and a gunpowder work be set on foot.' 'An assessment for a month's pay for 120 soldiers for garrison in the town, which to be also monthly.' 'An assessment of £1000 ordered for making fortifications and buying 6 pieces of ordnance.'

Sir Francis Ottley continued undisturbed in his office as Governor till the spring of 1643, and during the time he held it no attempt was made by the Parliamentary forces to obtain possession of the town. They were, however, very active in Cheshire. So far they had no garrison in Shropshire, but from Nantwich, just over the border, Sir William Brereton contrived to harass the northern portion of the county. In January 1643, an attempt was made by the Royalists under Sir Thomas Ashton to capture Nantwich, but the attempt ended in disaster. To remedy this, the king appointed Lord Capel 'Lieutenant-General of His Majesty's Forces in the counties of Worcester, Salop, and Chester, and the six northern counties of Wales.' This appointment, for a time, infused fresh life into the Royalist cause. The Parliamentarians, however, retaliated by establishing

Shrewsbury

a garrison at Wem, within ten miles of the county town. This effectually resisted an attack by Lord Capel, and gave occasion to the following couplet :—

> 'The women of Wem and a few musketeers
> Beat the Lord Capel and all his cavaliers.'

In the autumn the Royalist spirits were again revived by the accession of troops from Ireland, and the king's cause for a while seemed about to triumph. Sir Francis Ottley continued still to be Governor of the town, though he does not appear in such prominence, Lord Capel having appointed others to assist him in his duties; and in November the Corporation entertained with 'a gallon of sack, 2 lbs. of sugar, and 2 dozen cakes,' a new Field-Marshal of Cheshire, Shropshire, and North Wales, in the person of Lord Byron. Early in 1644, however, a still more important person appeared on the scene. This was Prince Rupert, nephew of the king, who as a cavalry leader showed a bravery that was unsurpassed, but which was neutralised by a rashness which won for him the appellation of the 'Mad Cavalier.' Though a prince of Germany he knew England well, having spent part of his boyhood at the English Court, and in 1642 he had returned to

assist the Royalist cause in the struggle which was just then opening. He took part in most of the important battles of the next three years, the general experience being that his resistless charge won a success at the beginning of the fight which he lost by a rash and headlong pursuit. Prince Rupert came to Shrewsbury on February 18th, 1644, and took up his quarters at the house of 'Master Jones the lawyer,' at the west end of St. Mary's Church. The mansion still stands, and though the front towards St. Mary's is now hidden by modern buildings[1] and the house is divided into several tene-

THE HOUSE IN WHICH PRINCE RUPERT STAYED

[1] There is an engraving of the house as it was, in Owen and Blakeway's *History*, vol. i. p. 420.

ments, the side along Church Street preserves its gables and projecting upper storey. The interior also contains the original staircase and other oak fittings.

The letter of Sir Francis Ottley, dated the last day of January, in which he acknowledged Prince Rupert's missive telling him of his appointment, breathes the air of one who was weary of a burden which he had found very difficult to bear, and concludes with the words, 'Our hearts do long for your presence to settle the distractions and complaints among us.' It was probably, therefore, with no unwillingness on his part, that in the following July his tenure of the governorship came to an end. He was succeeded by Sir Fulke Hunkes and Colonel Broughton, who, however, each held the office only for a very short time, and then, in October, it passed into the hands of Sir Michael Ernley, whose governorship proved much more eventful.

Prince Rupert made vigorous efforts to raise money and adjust the financial difficulties which had arisen with the Corporation of the town, but without much success. He also by his rapid movements about Shropshire and the neighbouring counties gave an impetus for a time to the Royal cause, but neither he

nor his brother, Prince Maurice, who appeared on the scene afterwards, was able to make any real headway against the increasing power of the Parliament. Neither men nor money was forthcoming for the king's necessities, and many of those who had been among his warmest adherents grew lukewarm and discontented under the financial pressure. Meanwhile the garrison which the Parliament had established at Wem, and which all the efforts of the Royalists had failed to dislodge, was keeping a vigilant eye on Shrewsbury, in the hope of an opportunity presenting itself of a favourable attack. This garrison was under the command of General, or, as he was then, Colonel Mytton, one of the most distinguished leaders on the Parliamentary side. He was himself a Shropshire man, having his seat at Halston, and was the ancestor of the much less worthy, but perhaps better known, 'Jack' Mytton of sporting notoriety, who lived in the first half of the nineteenth century. At last the wished-for opportunity came. The Governor had weakened the garrison by sending a detachment for the relief of Chester, and he was himself too ill to maintain a vigilant supervision of those who remained. This

Shrewsbury

state of things was communicated to the Parliamentary leaders by those who sympathised with them in the town, and a plan was promptly formed for its capture. On the night of Friday, February 21st, 1645, a force of cavalry and infantry, to the number of about 1200, started from Wem, and advancing under the cover of the darkness, reached the end of the Castle Foregate about four o'clock on the Saturday morning. Here they divided, the cavalry advancing to the gate below the castle, and the infantry crossing the fields till they reached the Severn. These latter men advanced along the bank till they reached the Castle Ditch, which ran from the castle to the river, and was defended with palisades. Meanwhile their leader, Colonel Reinking, embarked in a boat with a number of carpenters, and getting to the other side of the palisades began to saw them down. By this time the garrison was alarmed, but the mischief was done. A breach had been effected, and the assailants made their way up the slope into the town. Some went through the Water Gate and along what is now Pride Hill to the square; the others, led by Lieutenant Benbow, climbed up through the gardens which lay between the castle wall and the Council House, and made

THE WATER GATE

their way to the gate, where the cavalry were waiting. These were now admitted and, with Colonel Mytton at their head, hurried to the square, where they found a fierce contest going on between their companions and the town guard. Their coming decided the issue of this contest, and by the time that day broke on the scene Shrewsbury was in the hands of the Parliament. Two positions still held out—one was the castle, and the other a fort at the

top of Frankwell, bearing the name of Cadogan, of which, however, little is known, and of which all traces have disappeared. Both of these capitulated during the day. It was an important event for the Parliamentary party, and their rejoicing was great: it was to all a matter of thankfulness that it was almost a bloodless victory, the total number who were killed on both sides being together less than ten. The result, however, points almost certainly to treachery, for the whole circumstances of the capture showed a local knowledge which, in a dark night, could only have belonged to those very intimately acquainted with every part of the town, and even then requiring for a successful issue the connivance of some who ought to have been its defenders.

Lieutenant, afterwards Captain, Benbow has been already mentioned as leading one of the attacking parties, and probably the result was more due to him than any other individual. He was a Shrewsbury man, and at this time a zealous Parliamentarian, but six years later he was fighting on the Royalist side at the battle of Worcester. Here he was taken prisoner, and on October 15th, 1651, by Cromwell's command, he was shot at Shrewsbury in the garden between the castle wall and the Council House,

through which he had led the Parliamentary soldiers on the night of February 21st, 1645. He was buried the following day in the churchyard of Old St. Chad's, and his tombstone is still to be seen near the footpath which now crosses the churchyard. It is a plain slab, level with the grass, on the left-hand side going from College Hill to Belmont, the inscription being simply, 'Here lieth the body of Captaine John Benbow who was buried October 16, 1651.' He must not be confused with his more illustrious namesake, Admiral John Benbow, to be mentioned later.

We cannot pursue the story of the Civil War in detail after the capture of Shrewsbury. The Governor, Sir Michael Ernley, died of consumption a few days after he was taken prisoner; his predecessor, Sir Francis Ottley, lived to see the king whom he had so faithfully served beheaded on January 30th, 1649, but died before that year was ended. In the intervening period, during which the town was in the hands of the Parliament, various attempts were devised to recover it from them, but no real effort was made in that direction. The inhabitants had still reason to complain of heavy taxation, but under the capable governorship of Humphrey Mackworth

they enjoyed a period of considerable tranquillity. This Governor seems himself to have been popular with the townspeople, but Gough in his gossiping *History of Myddle*, written in 1700, relates a story about his lieutenant which was by no means creditable, though it illustrates the social condition of Shrewsbury at the time. 'Mr. Mackworth made Captaine Hill (a prodigall drunken fellow who before the warrs was a pittifull barber in this towne) Lieutenant of the Castle. Butt the townesmen and garrison soldiers hated him; and therefore as soone as there was a prospect of the returne of King Charles the Second they conspired against him; and one of the townsmen sent for him out of the Castle to drinke with him at the Loggerheads, an alehouse hard by; and as soon as hee was gon out of the Castle, the soldiers shutt the gate and cast his cloathes and boots over the wall, and immediately the towne was in an uproare; and Hill for feare of his life fled away that night, and I never heard more of him.'[1]

Mackworth died in 1654, and as a member of Cromwell's Privy Council received a stately funeral in Westminster Abbey. His friend and patron the

[1] Gough's *Antiquities and Memoirs of Myddle*, p. 177.

Protector followed him in 1658, and then the Puritan Commonwealth went to pieces rapidly. The desire for a return to the old order of things both in Church and State had been gradually growing from the day when the king was led to execution, and when the supreme power passed from the strong hands of Oliver Cromwell into the weak grasp of his son Richard, the restoration of monarchy was only a question of time. Before, however, passing from the period of Puritan rule, a word must be said as to its effect on ecclesiastical affairs in Shrewsbury. Of course the saints were abolished: the four old churches became Chadd's, Marye's, Alkmund's, and Julyan's, and various other forms of nomenclature and modes of expression came into fashion, which now only provoke a smile; but they were excrescences on the face of a movement which had taken very firm hold of a large portion of the nation. Puritanism, indeed, was not originally a plant of English growth, but was an importation from the Continent, where the Reformation had made a wider breach with the past than was the case in this country. It found, however, a congenial soil in some parts of England, particularly in the eastern half and in the large towns generally, and had been

silently growing during the latter years of Elizabeth's reign and that of her successor. We must not, however, think of Puritanism as a uniform and unbroken movement. It was divided into parties which showed considerable hostility one to another when they were not united against what they regarded as their common enemy. At the beginning of the troubles of Charles's reign Presbyterianism was predominant, but when the rule passed into the hands of Cromwell and the army, Independency took the lead. This was more aggressive than Presbyterianism, and many a religious-minded Puritan of the old school shrank from this new development, in which religion too often was only a cloak for mere politics. Both, however, were agreed in their hatred of Episcopacy, and this, as represented by the Church of England, was the common enemy which they used their utmost efforts to suppress. In Shrewsbury, as elsewhere, the Episcopal clergy were got rid of, and those who had received Presbyterian ordination were substituted. In 1644 it was made a crime to use the Prayer Book either publicly or privately, and the 'Directory for Public Worship' was enjoined instead. A little later, other regulations were made in the same direction with regard to the performance of

baptisms and marriages; indeed, few documents throw greater light on the life of the period than the registers[1] and other parish books of the churches which are still preserved. They show unmistakably the confusion into which ecclesiastical matters fell, and the steady growth of the desire to return to the old order of things.[2] Of the Puritan incumbents of the Shrewsbury churches, two are specially noticeable. One was John Bryan, who was minister first of the Abbey and afterwards of St. Chad's; the other was Francis Tallents, minister of St. Mary's. Both were friends of Richard Baxter, himself a Shropshire man, and not only men of ability, but men of moderate and tolerant views towards those who differed from them. On the passing of the Act of Uniformity in 1662 they became joint ministers of the chapel in High Street, which was erected for them as a Presbyterian place of worship, but afterwards became Unitarian. By the wish of Tallents the following inscription was painted near the entrance, and still

[1] Cf. Registers printed for the Shropshire Register Society, *passim*.

[2] Cf. an article by the author in the *Antiquary* for July 1902: 'Sidelights on the Civil War from some old Parish Registers of Shropshire.'

remains: 'This place was built not for Faction or a Party, but to promote Rèpentance and Faith in communion with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.'

The Puritan *régime* came to an end when General Monk, in 1660, declared for the king, and by degrees the stream of social and religious life in Shrewsbury returned into its old channels. Charles II.'s reign passed without any marked effect on the town, but towards its close a demand was made by the crown for the surrender of its charter. After some objection this was done, and a new one was granted among the first acts of James II. This contained a clause giving the king absolute power to remove any or all of the officials at his will, and justly provoked much ill-feeling towards him. James, however, determined to increase his influence by a royal progress through this part of his kingdom, and accordingly arrived in Shrewsbury from Ludlow on August 24th, 1687. Whatever might be the undercurrent of feeling, the Corporation in its official capacity did him all honour. It was nearly half a century since the last royal visit, and so they sent messengers to Gloucester and Worcester to inquire how his Majesty had been entertained there. Among other directions, it was ordered

that every householder should gravel the street in front of his house just before the king arrived. It was the afternoon when this arrival took place, and his Majesty proceeded to the Council House, where the Corporation presented him with an address and a hundred guineas. The next morning he touched various persons for the 'king's evil' (scrofula), including an old woman from Myddle, as to whom, however, Gough says, the touch 'did her no good'; and then he left the town. His mode of departure is described in a contemporary manuscript which throws light on the feeling that prevailed, both on the king's side and that of the townspeople, who apparently wished to lay before him a statement of grievances. 'On the morrow being Friday all the fish that could be had was bought up and presented in order for his dinner, and the Mayor and Alldermen, being twelve and assistants twenty-four came to attend him; but he stayd not to dine nor to see them, butt gott downe a private back staires, and for hast gott upon the wrong side of the horse, and to Whitchurch that nighte.'

His despotic reign, however, was soon to come to a close. On November 5th, 1688, William of Orange landed at Torbay, and Shrewsbury in due course had

its share in the liberty which the Revolution brought in its train.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SUMMER HOUSE
ST. JOHN'S HILL

ABBEY·FORECATE :

CHAPTER IX

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

PART I.—*Illustrious Natives and Visitors*

GIBBONS' MANSION, WYLE COP

WE now approach the eighteenth century, during which—if the expression is allowable—Shrewsbury developed a degree of individuality which belonged to it in a like degree at no other period of its history. This arose mainly from its position as the centre of a large country district, while its distance from other towns, and especially from London, kept it from entering into competition with

them. Shropshire, like the other west midland shires, has always been 'a region in which local life was strong'—to use the words of Bishop Creighton[1]—and in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries life both in town and country had a character of its own. It will be remembered that Addison, in his charming creation of Sir Roger de Coverley, places the home of that worthy knight in Worcestershire, and his counterpart might have been found without difficulty in Shropshire. In the author's own parish of Condover lived one such, who would have been a contemporary if Sir Roger had really existed, and who in some respects might have sat for his portrait. This was Edward Owen, second son of Sir William Owen, the owner of Condover Hall. What is known of his life is soon told. He was probably born in 1613, married in 1640 a lady whom he lost the following year in giving birth to a son, and he was buried at Condover in 1700. But there is other testimony to the kind of man he was. Among the excellences of Sir Roger de Coverley related in the *Spectator* were his kindness to his dependants, and his care for his parish church and his chaplain who ministered there. Edward Owen had equal care in

[1] *Some English Shires*, p. 209.

regard to Condover. He gave a benefaction of £50 to the poor, and when a portion of the church fell down gave the same sum towards its rebuilding, together with one of the bells for the new tower. Besides this he made valuable gifts of communion plate, and lastly gave directions to his great-nephew and heir, by which, in 1734, an annuity of £69 charged on certain of his lands became part of the income of the vicar for ever. In memory of this transaction the two portraits of uncle and great-nephew still adorn the walls of the vicarage, and bear their silent testimony to one who, like Sir Roger de Coverley, gave various gifts to 'beautify' the church in which he worshipped, and 'because he knew' his chaplain's 'value, settled upon him a good annuity for life.'

Illustrious Natives and Visitors

When we turn to Shrewsbury itself we find one of its first associations in the eighteenth century was concerned with literature. The productions of the press at the time were not productions of which the nation could be proud. Owing partly to the reaction from Puritanism, and partly to the patronage of a dissolute Court, the secular literature which marked the period following the Restoration was more degraded than at any other period of English history.

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Fortunately its circulation was largely confined to London, and it had little influence on the country generally; and such influence as it had, both in town and in the provinces, soon received an elevating impetus from Addison and his fellow-essayists in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. This degradation showed itself especially in the literature of the Drama, and Wycherley, one of the worst offenders, was a Shropshire man. Shrewsbury, however, was concerned in the production of one of the popular plays of the period in another way. Towards the close of 1704, or early in 1705, there was staying at the Raven Inn—since rebuilt—a young Irishman, the object of whose visit was to procure recruits for the army then engaged under Marlborough in the war with the French king. The battle of Blenheim, or Hochstadt, had been fought in the preceding August, and the nation was everywhere prepared to do honour to those who had helped to secure so great a victory. The officer in question was George Farquhar, who had begun life as an actor, but had forsaken that profession for a commission in the army. At the time of his visit he had already composed several plays, and he took the opportunity of being in Shrewsbury to write the comedy of *The Recruiting Officer*, choosing several of

his characters from persons at that time well known in the town. The scenes which have to do with the actual work of recruiting, though coarse, are clever and interesting, but those which have to do with the lovemaking of the plot are not only coarse but, to the last degree, stupid; so that an audience which could have found pleasure in witnessing such a play must have had very little taste, as well as very little sense of decency. The principal male characters, from the hero, Captain Plume—said to be drawn from Farquhar himself—down to the meanest, make no pretence to any sort of morality, and among the female characters there is not one who represents a standard of pure-mindedness. This contemptuous representation of women was, however, characteristic of the eighteenth century;[1] and Farquhar may have been able to plead some excuse in his own case, if the story is true that the lady to whom he was married had deceived him by pretending to possess a fortune which did not exist. It may be added that he only lived to write one other play, and then his health broke down, and he died before he had reached the age of thirty. The local allusions in *The Recruiting*

[1] Leslie Stephen's *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 66.

Officer are numerous, and all more or less complimentary to the town and neighbourhood. It is dedicated to 'All Friends round the Wrekin,' and part of this dedication is worth quoting. 'It was my good fortune,' he says, 'to be ordered some time ago into the place which is made the scene of this comedy. I was a perfect stranger to everything in Salop but its character of loyalty, the number of its inhabitants, the alacrity of the gentlemen in recruiting the army, with their generous and hospitable reception of strangers. This character I found so amply verified in every particular, that you made recruiting, which is the greatest fatigue on earth to others, to be the greatest pleasure in the world to me. The kingdom cannot show better bodies of men, better inclinations for the service, more generosity, more good understanding, nor more politeness than is to be found at the foot of the Wrekin.' The play opens with a scene in the Market Square, in which Kite, the recruiting sergeant, invites all 'who have a mind to serve His Majesty and pull down the French King' to repair to him 'at the sign of the Raven in this good town of Shrewsbury'; and in a later scene allusion is made to the potency of the 'March beer' served at that hostelry. 'The walk by the Severn,'

by which is evidently meant the present Quarry, though the avenues were not planted till about fifteen years later, forms another scene, and gives occasion to the exclamation, 'A fine river, this same Severn!' And just as Shakespeare introduced Shrewsbury clock into the warlike exploits of Falstaff, so does Farquhar use the same idea in connection with his recruits. When Sergeant Kite, acting under the directions of his master, Captain Plume, has succeeded in inveigling two country bumpkins into enlisting while under the influence of drink, and they wish to return home, Kite says to them, 'Nay then, I command you to stay. I place you both sentinels in this place for two hours, to watch the motion of St. Mary's clock, you, and you the motion of St. Chad's; and he that dares stir from his post till he be relieved shall have my sword in his guts the next minute.' When Old St. Chad's was standing, as it was in 1704, both clocks would be easily visible from the same spot. Only one other allusion need be mentioned. When Justice Balance wishes to send his daughter Sylvia into the country, the order he gives to his servant is, 'Put four horses to the coach.' It throws light on the state of the roads and the methods of travel in the county two hundred years ago.

Illustrious Natives and Visitors

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Shrewsbury also had its association at this period with the Navy as well as the Army, in the career of Admiral John Benbow. He was probably the nephew of Captain John Benbow, already mentioned in connection with the capture of the Castle by the Parliamentary forces in 1645. The future admiral was born about the year 1653, in the house which is now St. Mary's Vicarage, which stands near the river on the way from the railway station to Coton Hill, and is marked by the lopped trunk of an ancient poplar tree. In the branches of this tree, now almost dead, there hangs a key said to have been deposited there by Benbow himself when as a lad he ran away from home to go to sea. He spent the first part of his naval career in the merchant service, being in command, when about thirty, of the *Benbow* frigate, in connection with which is a gruesome story. It is related that his vessel being attacked by Moorish pirates, he beat them off with a slaughter of thirteen of them, whose heads he salted and took with him to Spain. On the Custom-house authorities of Cadiz insisting on an inspection of what he had described as 'salt provisions for his own use,' he rolled them out before them and offered them as a present. The story goes on to say that this led to his introduction

to the King of Spain, and that he wrote to James II. commending Benbow to his notice. Any way we find him, soon after the Revolution, in the Royal Navy doing good service in the Channel against the French, and protecting the English merchantmen. He was in command of the flotilla which bombarded St. Malo in 1693, and of that which laid siege to Dunkirk three years later. Then he commanded the fleet in the West Indies for a couple of years, and on his return was appointed Vice-Admiral of the Blue. He did not, however, remain long at home. The English possessions in the West Indies were too important not to be well protected, and in 1701 a capable commander was again required to take charge of them. It is said that William III. was unwilling to send Benbow out again so soon to what was regarded as an unhealthy station, but when various names of courtly sailors were submitted to him, the king broke out into puns: 'No, they won't do; these are all fresh-water *beaux*; the service requires a *beau* of another sort, so honest Ben*bow* must go after all.' The story must be taken for what it is worth: but, any way, the admiral willingly obeyed orders, and sailed on what proved his last expedition. He encountered the French under Du Casse off Cape Santa

Marta, in South America, on August 19th, 1702, and though the enemy were in sùperior force, he pursued them for several days. To his great chagrin, however, he was not supported by the commanders of his other ships, who appear to have shown both cowardice and insubordination. In the course of this running action his leg was shattered by a chain-shot, but he persisted in remaining on deck, and gave a characteristic reply to one of his officers, who expressed his sorrow at the loss of his leg: 'I am sorry for it too, but I would rather have lost them both than have seen this dishonour brought upon the English nation. But—do you hear?—if another shot should take me off, behave like brave men, and fight it out.' He was obliged to sail to Jamaica, and though two of the offending officers were afterwards shot, he never overgot his vexation. On arriving at Jamaica, it was found necessary to amputate the shattered limb; fever ensued, and he died November 2nd, 1702. In the Natural History Room of the Shrewsbury Museum hangs a large portrait of the admiral, and near the vestry door in St. Mary's Church will be found a marble monument and bust to his memory, designed by one of Chantrey's pupils. The epitaph is full of panegyric, but none will deny his claim to be grate-

fully remembered in the old town in which he was born.

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The next public excitement in which Shrewsbury had a share was partly religious, but much more political. In the year 1709 Queen Anne was on the throne and a Whig ministry in power. There were many, however, who still looked askance at the principles introduced by the Revolution, and remembering something of the time when Puritanism had trodden down Throne and Church together, were morbidly afraid of everything which threatened a renewed attack on either of those institutions. In the year mentioned Henry Sacheverell gave voice to this feeling, and made himself a name in history which he would otherwise have hardly deserved. The son of a clergyman at Marlborough, he was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he was a contemporary and friend of Addison, who dedicated to him one of his earlier works. Sacheverell in due course became Fellow of his College and filled various University offices, proceeding to his Doctor's degree in 1708. While at Oxford he 'had the care of the education of most of the young gentlemen of quality and fortune that were admitted of the College,' and among them was Robert Lloyd of

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Aston near Oswestry, who was afterwards M.P. for the county of Salop.

After holding for a short time the vicarage of Cannock, which, however, it is doubtful if he ever visited, he was appointed preacher at St. Saviour's, Southwark, and while holding that office he preached the two sermons which made him famous. The one was delivered at Derby Assizes in August 1709, and the other before the Lord Mayor of London, in St. Paul's Cathedral, in the following November. Both sermons advocated unreasoning obedience to the Throne, and especially proclaimed the Church to be in danger from the policy of the party then in office. As his remarks were freely interspersed with personal allusions by no means complimentary to those responsible for the policy, his utterances provoked very strong feeling, and the Government impeached him before the House of Lords. The result was that—by a comparatively small majority—the sermons were ordered to be burned by the common hangman in front of the Royal Exchange, and he himself was suspended from preaching for three years, though he might perform his other ecclesiastical duties. Then his triumph began, for there was a strong feeling in the country in favour

of the views he held. The sentence against him was pronounced on March 23rd, 1710, and on June 26th following he was presented to the living of Selattyn, near Oswestry, by his old pupil Robert Lloyd. His friends determined that his journey to his new benefice should be a triumphal progress, and such it proved. His supporters in Shrewsbury had, at the conclusion of his trial, shown such zeal on his behalf as to be accused of causing a riot, and they were prepared to welcome his personal approach with the wildest enthusiasm. He went to Selattyn, where he was duly inducted rector, and afterwards gave a 'handsome entertainment to all that were present at the ceremony.' There is, however, no record of his officiating in the church, and after staying a day or two he returned to Oxford. There is an extant letter which describes this visit to Shrewsbury. It is dated at Bridgnorth July 6th, and says: 'The Dr. having been invited to Shrewsbury on the 3rd instant was met at Monford Bridge three miles off this town by [various leading men of the county mentioned by name] and all the neighbouring gentlemen and others, and was conducted to the town by above 5000 horse, after which he was nobly entertained there, as well as at Mr. Owen's of Cundover

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from whence we arrived at this place.' His approach, we are told, was proclaimed by the town crier, and peals welcomed him from every church tower. The crowd was wild with excitement, and we can well believe that the story told of an old woman at Oswestry was not without its parallel in Shrewsbury. It is related of the good lady in question that, owing to the crowd, she was only able to catch a glimpse of the holy man, but she found much consolation in having a sight of 'his ever-blessed wig' as he rode along.

In 1713, Sacheverell was appointed to the Rectory of St. Andrew's, Holborn, and soon after was publicly thanked by the House of Commons for a sermon he had preached before them in St. Margaret's, Westminster. He lived till 1724, but Shropshire knew him no more, though his popularity showed itself in the number of children who for more than one generation were baptized by his name. He was buried in the vault of his church in Holborn, but was not permitted to rest there in peace, his lead coffin being among those stolen about twenty years later.[1]

[1] For full details of Sacheverell's visit to Shropshire, cf. Shropshire Archæological Society's *Transactions*, 2nd Series, vol. viii., 'Selattyn,' by Hon. Mrs. Bulkeley-Owen.

SHIP INN AND ROWLEY'S MANSION

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Closely connected with the principles which gave Dr. Sacheverell his notoriety, but more essentially religious, was another movement in which Shrewsbury took part—namely, that of the Nonjurors. When James II. fled from England and William and Mary were accepted by the nation in his stead, there were a considerable number, as already hinted, who could not see their way to taking the oath of allegiance to the new occupants of the throne. Some were Jacobites, pure and simple, who still adhered to the Stuart dynasty, but there were a large number who, without being political partisans, were unable to reconcile with their consciences the oath of allegiance to a new sovereign while there was still living one to whom they had already sworn fealty. The bulk of these were to be found among the bishops and clergy, with whom also another argument had weight. 'They realised the existence of the Church as a distinct spiritual society with laws of its own, whose connection with the State, however beneficial, was purely accidental; and, as a consequence, they insisted on the independency of the Church of any power on earth in the exercise of her purely spiritual power and authority.'[1]

[1] Overton's *Nonjurors*, p. 6.

The men who adhered to these opinions became Nonjurors. Their adherence, more or less firmly, to the principle of non-resistance to their lawful sovereign whom once for all they had accepted as God's vicegerent, prevented them from swearing allegiance to the new dynasty, while their exalted idea of the spiritual authority of the Church shrank from the prevalent Erastianism. Among the first Nonjurors were the Archbishop of Canterbury and eight bishops—some of whom had been among the seven whom James II. had imprisoned in the Tower. These were all deprived of their sees on their non-acceptance of the oath, and their example was followed by about four hundred clergy. Shrewsbury, however, had to do with the movement only in its later development. Unfortunately, the ill-advised step was taken of perpetuating the division by the consecration of other bishops of what they regarded as the Orthodox Church. But the matter soon became complicated by disagreements in the body itself, and there ensued an irregular as well as a regular line of consecration.

Of these irregularly consecrated bishops, one was William Cartwright. He was born in 1730 at Newcastle-under-Lyme, and was brought up as an

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'apothecary.' He received Holy Orders from the nonjuring Bishop Deacon, probably in London, and married his daughter. About 1769 he removed to Shrewsbury, where he practised as a medical man, occupying a house in Mardol. He afterwards, however, retired, and went to live in the Abbey Foregate, where he died in 1799. All through his residence in Shrewsbury, he ministered to a small congregation who were accustomed to gather at his house. 'The bishop's appearance was dignified and venerable, his person handsome, and his manners those of a perfect gentleman. The congregation, as far as the recollection of his daughter serves, was very limited; indeed, after the death of Deacon Podmore, was confined to his own family. The service was performed by the bishop in his dining-room, at the upper end of which was an organ, which his wife played.' The above is a quotation from *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, published in 1879; the author is able to add some further particulars, for which he is indebted to a conversation with the late Archdeacon Lloyd. It was Bishop Cartwright's custom to wear a purple coat, and he was very scrupulous as to his food. On an occasion at which Archdeacon Lloyd's informant had been present as a child, a hare was

served up for dinner, but the bishop would not touch it till he had ascertained that it had been shot and not snared, it being against his principles to eat of 'things strangled.' He shared this scrupulosity with the Nonjurors generally; indeed, their ideal was to return to the practices of the Primitive Church in every particular. In his last illness, at his special request, he received the Holy Communion from the hands of Rev. W. G. Rowland, then in charge of the Abbey, and the chalice used on the occasion was in the possession of Archdeacon Lloyd at the time of the conversation alluded to. His remains rest in St. Giles's Churchyard, not far from the entrance gate, his tomb bearing the simple epitaph: 'Underneath lie the remains of William Cartwright, apothecary, who died 14th Oct. 1799, aged 69.'

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The other Shrewsbury Nonjuror has been already mentioned in connection with Bishop Cartwright's scanty congregation in Mardol. Thomas Podmore had no advantages with which to begin life, but by industry and force of character made his way. Brought up at Manchester as a barber and perukemaker, he adopted the Jacobite principles, of which that town was a stronghold, and took part in the

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rising of 1745. He probably received deacon's orders in Manchester, but he soon after removed to Shrewsbury, where he was appointed master of the school which forms part of the foundation of Millington's Hospital in Frankwell,—at that time a new institution. This post he filled for nearly forty years, at the same time assisting Cartwright in his ministerial work. He was also the author of a book with a portentously long title, the object of which was to prove that the Greek Church, the Roman, the Church of England, and the 'anti-Episcopalians' had each and all added to, or fallen short of, primitive truth, which, in his opinion, still found a home only in the little body of which he was himself a member. It happened that part of the site of Millington's Hospital was in mediæval times occupied by one of the numerous chapels already alluded to,[1] and was consecrated ground. Podmore therefore requested that he might be buried on the terrace in front of the Hospital, and there his tombstone is still to be seen. The inscription is as follows:—'M. S. Rev^d. Thos. Podmore, Ecc. Orth. Brit. Diac. [Deacon of the Orthodox British Church] ob. 10 Apr. 1785,

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 85. The memory of this fact is perpetuated by the name 'Chapel' Street.

ENTRANCE GATE OF HOUSE IN ABBEY FOREGATE

æt. 81. May he find mercy of the Lord in that day.'

The mention of Jacobite principles and the business to which Podmore had been brought up, may introduce us to another Shrewsbury celebrity of the

eighteenth century, whose name has already occurred more than once. Frequent allusion has been made to the Taylor Manuscript. This very quaint and interesting record is in the library of Shrewsbury School. It extends from 1372 to 1603, and was probably compiled by one of the Lyster family. Richard Lyster, M.P., presented it to Dr. Taylor, and it was by him bequeathed to the school library, and has ever since gone by his name. Taylor's personal career was a noticeable one. An entry in St. Alkmund's Church Register informs us that he was baptized in 1704, that his name was John, and that his father was a barber. He owed his advancement to Edward Owen, the then Squire of Condover, to whom his father one day had happened to say that he could never get Jack to shave any one cleanly, or dress a wig, as he was everlastingly poring over his dull books. Mr. Owen took the boy into his favour, and sent him to St. John's College, Cambridge, of which he became Fellow. It is said that he afterwards forfeited the friendship of his patron by refusing, on the occasion of one of his visits to Condover, to drink a Jacobite toast on his bare knees. At Cambridge he filled the offices of University Librarian and Registrar. He afterwards went into Holy Orders,

becoming Archdeacon of Buckingham and Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's, but he rarely failed to spend the summer months in Shropshire. The great work of his life was an edition of Demosthenes which he did not live to complete, but which caused him to be generally known as 'Demosthenes' Taylor. He appears to have been more apt at writing than speaking, for Dr. Johnson said of him, 'Demosthenes Taylor is the most silent man—the merest statue of a man that I have ever seen.'[1] He died in 1766.

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Shrewsbury in the eighteenth century also had its association with music. In the Register of St. Mary's Church, under the date May 5th, 1726, there occurs among the baptisms, 'Charles and Susannah, son and daughter of James and Anne Macburny.' This child, Charles Macburny, is no other than the future Dr. Burney, who was highly distinguished as a musician, and is perhaps still more widely known as the father of Madame D'Arblay. The MacBurneys—as shown by the original form of the name—came from Scotland, but the grandfather of the musician was settled at Hanwood, near Shrewsbury, where for some time he appears to have acted as land-steward to the Earl

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, under date April 25th, 1778.

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of Ashburnham. Here the father, James MacBurney, was born, but he appears to have been living at Coton Hill at the time of his son Charles's birth. James MacBurney married twice, and had a large family, the members of which differed widely in age; the musician and his twin sister were among the youngest. He—Charles—tells us that he spent his childhood at Condover, but, when about thirteen, he removed to Chester to pursue his musical education under the then organist of the Cathedral, who had previously been organist of St. Chad's, Shrewsbury. About 1741, however, he returned to his native town, and continued his musical studies under his eldest half-brother, James,[1] who was then organist of St. Mary's, and who continued to fill that office till near his death, which took place in 1789. In 1744 Charles removed to London, where he studied under Dr. Arne, and began to publish compositions of his own. In 1751, however, his health broke down, and he was advised to remove into the country. He accordingly became organist at King's Lynn, where he remained for the next nine years. He took his

[1] The following is the entry of James's baptism in the Register of St. Julian's Church: '1704, Jan. 22nd. James, son of James Macburny, a stranger, and Rebekah his wife.'

degree of Doctor of Music at Oxford in 1769, and during the three years following travelled over a considerable part of Europe, publishing on his return a narrative of his tours. The work, however, by which he is best known is his *History of Music*, the publication of which extended over a period of twelve years. In 1783 he was appointed organist of Chelsea Hospital, where he remained till his death in 1814. Two of his children attained eminence: his son Charles, who was distinguished as a classical scholar and took Holy Orders; and his daughter Fanny, the author of *Evelina* and other novels, which were immensely popular in their day, who married General D'Arblay, a French refugee, and afterwards published her father's *Memoirs*, and also her own *Diary and Letters*. It will be remembered that this last work forms the subject of one of the most delightful of Macaulay's essays.

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It is impossible to mention Dr. Burney without being reminded of one who was among his most intimate friends, and who paid a visit to Shrewsbury in 1774. This was Dr. Johnson. The occasion was a journey into Wales made in company with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, but we gather from Boswell's

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Life that the great lexicographer did not specially enjoy himself, and we have little in Johnson's own *Diary* beside the bare record of the facts. '*Friday, Sept. 9th.*—When we came back (from Pistyll Rhaiadr) we took some cold meat, and notwithstanding the Doctor's[1] importunities, went that day to Shrewsbury. *Saturday, Sept. 10th.*—I sent for Gwynn (the architect of the English Bridge then building), and he showed us the town—the walls are broken and narrower than those of Chester. The town is large, and has many gentlemen's houses, but the streets are narrow. I saw Taylor's Library. We walked in the Quarry—a very pleasant walk by the river. *Sunday, Sept. 11th.*—We were at St. Chad's—a very large and luminous church. We were on the Castle Hill. *Monday, Sept. 12th.*—We called on Dr. Adams.'[2]

This Dr. William Adams was himself a man of considerable note. The son of a Shrewsbury alderman, he was born there in 1706, and spent some time at the school, but he was only thirteen when he entered Pembroke College, Oxford. Here

[1] Dr. Worthington, whose guests they had been at Llanrhaiadr.

[2] *Diary of a Journey into North Wales in the year* 1774, p. 129.

he made the acquaintance of Johnson, and they remained steadfast friends as long as they lived. In due course he became Fellow and Tutor of his College, but in 1732 he returned to Shrewsbury as Vicar of St. Chad's, an office which he filled for the next forty-three years. He afterwards became Archdeacon of Llandaff and Rector of Cound, near Shrewsbury, and in 1775 he was elected Master of his old College. His chief literary effort was an answer to Hume's *Essay on Miracles*, on which Hume remarked, when they met, that he had treated him better than he deserved. In this and all the controversies in which he was concerned, he seems to have shown a quality that was specially rare in the eighteenth century — the quality of abstaining from personal abuse of an opponent. Boswell has preserved a letter which Adams wrote soon after Johnson's death, which draws a pleasing picture of both the friends. In it he says, 'His last visit was I believe to my house, which he left after a stay of four or five days. We had much serious talk together, for which I ought to be the better as long as I live.' Johnson died December 13th, 1784, and his friend followed him January 13th, 1789. It is pleasant to think of the two old

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men enjoying together that 'light at evening time,' which is the reward of a well-spent life.

OLD TOMBSTONES AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH

CORNER·OF·BUTCHER·ROW

CHAPTER IX

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

PART II.—*Shrewsbury as a County Town—Social Life*

BOWDLER'S SCHOOL

WE must now turn from the associations of Shrewsbury in the eighteenth century with individuals, to the political and social life of the town as a whole during that period. It must be remembered in making this survey that the entire population of England was then comparatively small,

and that, when the period opened, the development of manufacturing industry was only in its infancy, even if it existed at all. Shrewsbury is one of the places which have never felt the force of industrial development except to a very limited degree, so that the progress of its increase in population may be taken as a strictly normal increase. The first recorded census was made in 1695 by order of the mayor, and the number of inhabitants was 7383. In 1750 this had increased to 8141. In 1801 the population had risen to 13,479; in 1901 it was 28,395. It will thus be seen that in the eighteenth century we are dealing with an actual population of less than 10,000, but in spite of this the town at that period had an importance which has not been exceeded, if it has ever been approached, at any other time. Lord Macaulay in one of the opening chapters of his *History* has drawn a sketch of England in 1685, in which he shows that the whole population of the country barely exceeded five millions—less than the present population of the metropolis; and in that chapter he alludes to Shrewsbury as follows: 'Shrewsbury was the chief place of an extensive and fertile district. The Court of the Marches of Wales was

held there.[1] In the language of the gentry many miles round the Wrekin, to go to Shrewsbury was to go to town. The provincial wits and beauties imitated, as well as they could, the fashions of St. James's Park in the walks along the side of the Severn.' He also alludes to a ballad preserved in the Pepysian Library at Cambridge, of which the burden is 'Shrewsbury for me.' The first verse of this ballad is as follows, but modern Salopians will agree that the sentiment is much superior to the doggerel in which it is expressed :

'A song in praise of that famous town
Which hath throughout all England gained renown,
In praise thereof let every one agree,
And say with one accord, Shrowsbury[2] for me.'

A more valuable sketch, however, of what Shrewsbury was in the early part of the eighteenth century will be found in Defoe's *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain* — more valuable than Macaulay's, because contemporary. He says: 'Shrewsbury is a beautiful, large, pleasant, populous, and rich town; full of gentry, and yet full of trade too; for here likewise is a great manufacture, as well of flannel as white broadcloth, which enriches

[1] This is only partially correct ; *vide supra*, p. 115.

[2] The spelling should be noted as indicative of the pronunciation.

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all the country round. The Severn in part surrounds the town, just as the Thames does the Isle of Dogs, so that it makes the form of an horse-shoe. Over it are two fine stone bridges, upon one of which is built a very noble gate, and over the arch of the gate the statue of the great Llewellin,[1] the idol of the Welsh and their last Prince of Wales. This is really a town of mirth and gallantry, something like Bury in Suffolk, or Durham in the north, but much bigger than either of them, or indeed than both together. Over the market-house is kept a kind of hall for the manufactures which are sold here weekly in very great quantities. They speak all English in the town, but on a market day you would think you were in Wales. Here is the greatest market, the greatest plenty of good provisions, and the cheapest that is to be met with in all the western part of England. There is no doubt but the cheapness of provisions joined to the pleasantness and healthiness of the place, draws a great many families thither who love to live within the compass of their estates.'[2]

Defoe is inaccurate in speaking of flannel and

[1] The statue in question was that of the Duke of York, not Llewelyn; *vide supra*, p. 110. [2] Defoe's *Tour*, vol. ii. p. 343.

cloth being manufactured within the town—it was mainly brought from Wales; but what he says of the attractiveness of Shrewsbury as a place of residence is strikingly borne out by the architectural history of the town during the period in question. It was a time when building operations were largely carried on. Nearly all the best residential houses date from the last quarter of the seventeenth or the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and they were mainly built and owned, not like the houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by wealthy burgesses, but by county families who lived in Shrewsbury during the whole or part of the year. And if we analyse the list of those who filled the office of mayor the same thing is apparent. During the latter half of the eighteenth century especially, and for the first twenty years of the nineteenth, far the majority of those who filled the office of chief-magistrate of the borough were men who belonged to county families.

It goes without saying that in a population composed of such elements political feeling would from time to time show itself strongly. In those days the town had its two Members of Parliament, and the elections were by no means pure. Indeed, the confession

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must be made that even in more modern times Shrewsbury has achieved notoriety in this respect, so that it is not surprising that in a venal age like the eighteenth century bribery was rampant. A contested election which took place in 1774 may be taken as an illustration of the political life of the period, and it is chosen because one of the candidates was a Salopian to whom the British Empire owes one of its deepest debts of gratitude, and also because the result brought about an important change in the method of election. The three candidates were Charlton Leighton, Esq. (afterwards Sir Charlton Leighton of Loton), who came forward for the first time, and the two sitting members—William Pulteney, Esq. (afterwards Sir William Pulteney), who lived at Shrewsbury Castle, and Robert, Lord Clive, whose seat was at the Styche, near Market Drayton, but who had previously for several years occupied the hall at Condover, where the names of two of his children appear in the Church Register of Baptisms. The candidates' colours—a conspicuous feature in every contested election were—Leighton (blue and yellow), Pulteney (light blue), and Clive (purple and red). There probably exists no record of the money expended by

the candidates, but such occasions were always extremely costly, and could only be faced by men who had the command of a long purse. It is true that the number of electors was small—less than six hundred voting on this occasion—but probably almost every one of these sold his vote for a considerable sum; and beside the amount spent in direct bribery, there were public-houses to be kept open for all comers with an unlimited supply of food, and especially of drink, and very often the employment of 'bludgeon men'—ruffians who were prepared to go to any length required to secure the interests of the candidate who had employed them. There was also another source of expense which formed an unusually important element in this particular election, and that was the conveyance of electors from a distance. For some considerable period before the year in question it had been a matter of dispute who were entitled to vote. The franchise was restricted to those who had been admitted burgesses of the town, but the question was whether freemen retained their right to vote when they were not living within the boundaries of the ancient parishes. The matter had been referred three times over to the House of Commons since the beginning of the

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century, and opposite resolutions had been passed, but the question was finally decided after the election of which we are speaking. The poll was kept open four days, and its result as declared by the mayor was that Clive and Leighton were elected. Pulteney, however, had tendered a considerable number of votes of non-resident freemen, which had been rejected: he, therefore, took measures to have the matter tried in the Court of King's Bench. This 'Mandamus Case,' as it was called, created a good deal of excitement, and involved important issues to the town. After a trial which lasted eleven hours the verdict was given confirming the right of all burgesses to vote irrespective of residence, and as the result Leighton was unseated, and Pulteney was declared by a committee of the House of Commons duly elected. A contemporary newspaper thus describes the reception of the news in Shrewsbury: 'On Thursday night last about nine o'clock an express arrived with the news that the committee for trying the validity of our contested election had given their opinion that Mr. Pulteney was duly elected. The bells at the different churches were immediately set to ring, a barrel of ale was given away in Raven Street, and the whole night was spent in festivity.

Mr. Pulteney is expected in a few days when there will, it is said, be the greatest rejoicings ever remembered in Shrewsbury.' Some readers will doubtless remember that the 'humours of a contested election' in the eighteenth century have been depicted by Hogarth with his usual graphic touch. He has depicted—as only Hogarth could—the bribery and corruption—the drunkenness and ruffianism—which were the common features of such an event. It is interesting to know that there has come down to us a pictorial record of the Shrewsbury election of 1774. There is in existence an old drawing of which a copy hangs in the dining-room of the Shropshire Club, which is called a 'Perspective View of the Guild Hall, Shrewsbury, taken during the time of the Poll at the contested Election, A.D. 1774.' It is in the style of Hogarth, and represents the Market Square, or rather part of it, with the old Guild Hall, which was taken down and rebuilt in 1834. On the steps are two officials apparently inviting electors to approach, while the space in front is occupied by a motley crowd. A few women are standing at the doors of adjacent houses, while at the back of the crowd are men huzzaing and waving their hats. In the middle are various groups, including three men

MARKET SQUARE DURING THE ELECTION OF 1774 (FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING)

on horseback, and a fourth bestriding an ox apparently intended for a prospective feast. The foreground of the picture is occupied by various idlers, among whom are a couple of boys preparing to fight; and a final touch of humour is given in the corner, where a stalwart burgess is in the act of stealing a kiss from a good-looking girl who does not seem greatly to resent his rudeness. But this election had its sad association as well as its humorous: it was the last in which Lord Clive lived to take part. It has already been said that the British Empire owes to Clive a deep debt of gratitude, and the salient points of his career are not unfamiliar. Born at the Styche in 1725, he was one of thirteen children. As a boy he was distinguished for all sorts of mad pranks, and at eighteen was shipped off to India, having obtained a writership in the service of the East India Company. The circumstances of that country at the time afforded, however, just the stimulus which his nature seemed to require, and by his bravery and military talent he quickly rose to a distinguished position as a soldier. Among other feats, one of the most remarkable was his capture in 1751 of the citadel of Arcot, which he held with a force of eighty English and one hundred and twenty

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Sepoys against an army of seven thousand natives and one hundred and twenty French. In 1753 he married, and returned to England. But in 1755 he returned to India where, a year later, he had to avenge on Surajah Dowlah the horrors of the 'Black Hole of Calcutta'; and this was followed, on June 23rd, 1757, by the great victory of Plassey, which he gained with an army little exceeding three thousand (of whom two-thirds were Sepoys) over the forces of Surajah Dowlah, which numbered fifty thousand, aided by about fifty French gunners. Some of Clive's subsequent dealings with the Hindoo powers were not to be justified, for he condescended to meet Oriental treachery with treachery, but his success was complete—he had given India to England. In 1760 he again returned home, and was rewarded with the Barony of Plassey in the peerage of Ireland. It was at this period that he first became Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury, and took up his residence at Condover. But in 1765 the affairs of India again required his presence, and he went out to reform the abuses which had arisen. As Governor of Bengal he showed that his skill as a civil administrator was little inferior to his ability as a general. After a stay of less than two years he returned home

again, but his reception by the nation this time was different from what it had been on the two previous occasions. His reform of abuses had raised up unscrupulous enmity on the part of those who were interested in their continuance, and he was greeted with a storm of obloquy which culminated in an inquiry before a Select Committee of the House of Commons. Shrewsbury, indeed, remained faithful to its member, and, as we have seen, re-elected him at the head of the poll in October 1774, but the end was drawing near. He was shattered in health, both of mind and body, and his physical ailments and the remedies prescribed for them alike combined to bring about a fatal result. Before November closed he died by his own hand. Shrewsbury has a permanent memorial of its hero in his statue, which occupies a conspicuous position in front of the old Market Hall in the Square. The figure is of bronze, standing on a pedestal of granite, on which is inscribed the single word 'Clive.' It was erected by subscription in 1860, and was designed by the Italian sculptor, Baron Marochetti, who had settled in England after the Revolutionary troubles on the Continent in 1848.

One is tempted to speak of some later elections, as

for instance the one which took place in 1819, when 'Jack' Mytton was elected, on which occasion that spendthrift candidate made promises of personal amendment which were by no means realised, and the feasting seems to have been unusually lavish even for those days; or the still later election of 1841, when Benjamin Disraeli (afterwards Lord Beaconsfield) was a successful candidate, whose curly locks and foppish dress and manner at the time are even yet a memory among old inhabitants.

Some passing allusion must also be made to the patriotism which Shrewsbury, and indeed the whole county, showed during the troublous time of the war with Napoleon at the close of the eighteenth century. In the somewhat stilted language of a contemporary clergyman used on the occasion of the presentation of colours to a volunteer company—'The aspect of the times was gloomy and terrific; the thunders of discord were heard on every side; and the trumpet of war was still exciting nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom.'[1] It was not, however, without reason that the speaker was able to go on—'We hear the loud alarms, but we hear them without terror, while we see so many of our brethren volun-

[1] *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, vol. i. p. 147.

tarily girding on their arms and resolutely advancing against the foreign and domestic troublers of our peace.' The fact was that Shropshire, headed by the county town, rose nobly to the occasion in what was a great national crisis. Their enthusiasm showed itself first in a 'voluntary contribution to Government in aid of the exigencies of the State to enable them to prosecute with vigour the just and necessary war.' This was started at a 'numerous and most respectable meeting of the Corporation,' held February 18th, 1798, when a sum of £500 was unanimously voted by that body; and this was followed by other liberal contributions, both public and private, one of the trades companies even going so far as to suspend their annual feast 'for the same laudable purpose.' The result was that a large sum was raised. The list of contributors contains the names of many persons of local interest, among them being Thomas Telford, the engineer, who was at that time county surveyor, and Rev. Hugh Owen and Rev. J. B. Blakeway, the historians of the town. But Salop was willing to give something besides money. On April 26th, 1798, a meeting of the magistrates was held to consider the position of affairs, and this was followed by a larger meeting at which it was unani-

mously resolved to form a body of yeomanry cavalry for Shropshire. Various gentlemen proceeded to raise companies, and troops were enrolled in all parts of the county. There were three bodies of volunteers in connection with Shrewsbury, two companies of infantry and a troop of cavalry. They appeared for the first time in uniform on July 27th, 1798, and a movement was begun of which the results have lasted even to the present day.

But it is time to turn to the more strictly social life of the town.

To go back, then, to the early part of the eighteenth century: it was only to be expected that, at a period when London was full of coffee-houses and social clubs, Shrewsbury would follow the example of the metropolis. Accordingly, a visitor in 1722 wrote: 'There is a good town-house, and the most coffee-houses round it that ever I saw in any town; but when you come into them they are but ale-houses, only they think that the name of coffee-house gives a better air.'[1] At most of these inns there existed all through the period in question social clubs to which most of the tradespeople belonged. The rule under which one of these was founded is

[1] *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, vol. i. (1875), p. 128.

still extant, and will give an idea of the objects for which they were formed: 'For a Society of Friendly Neighbours to meet at the House of William Pryce of the Gullet in Hill's Lane every Tuesday between the hours of Six and Ten of the Clock in the afternoon, to spend Two pence each Member, and the Members that are absent each Tuesday aforesaid shall forfeit Two pence to be laid out in provisions at the end of each Quarter of a year for a Dinner or Supper as the majority of Members shall agree. Dated 24 February 1785. God save the King.'[1] It is to be feared that the expenditure was not often confined to the statutory twopence, for there can be no doubt that such gatherings contributed largely to the drinking habits of the period. Nor were such drinking habits confined to any one class. Not only among the tradespeople and artisans, who would mainly frequent such a club as the one just described, but among those who held a good position in the county and inhabited the best houses in the town, there was an amount of coarseness, both of word and deed, which it is difficult for us now to realise.

[1] Readers of the *Spectator* may remember that No. 9 (March 10th, 1711) contains almost identical Rules of a London Twopenny Club. In this case no Nonjuror was allowed to be a member.

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Habitual drunkenness was regarded as no disgrace, and this too often resulted in open ruffianism. There is in existence a manuscript chronicle which belonged to William Cartwright, already alluded to as one of the last nonjuring bishops. In the entries, covering the first half of the century, there are constant allusions to ruffianly acts, especially on the part of the military who from time to time were stationed in the town. The following under the date 1716 may be taken as a specimen: 'A fray at the Raven between two officers of Dragoons, and Mr. Andrew Swift, and Mr. Robert Wood, an apothecary. The officers insisted on Mr. Swift and Mr. Wood drinking King George and Damnation to the Jacobites, which they refusing, the officers drew their swords, but were severely thrashed. Mr. Swift put his man on the fire and burnt him very much. The officers went off leaving their hatts, wigs, and swords (which were broke) behind them. The servants at the Raven shared the plunder amongst them. Sometime after, one Johnson with some other military gentry began another fray with the aforementioned Mr. Swift and Mr. Wood, but Capt. Smith, the commanding officer, interfering prevented any blows; but as Smith

was going to his quarters late in the night, Johnson murdered him near the Green Market,[1] by coming behind him and running him through; Johnson was acquitted though his sword was found bloody, and it was proved he went after Smith from the Raven.'[2] It must be owned, in fact, that as a whole it was an age of brutality, and this showed itself not merely in such incidents as that just related, but in the amusements which were most popular. It does not appear indeed that Shrewsbury ever indulged to any great extent in the pastime of bull-baiting, though there is record of the existence of a bull ring somewhere in the neighbourhood of the English Bridge; but the newspapers of the time abound in advertisements of cockfighting, and it is plain from the wording of these and the amount of the stakes that it was a fashionable sport, largely patronised by those in the high places of the county. This brutality of the age also showed itself in another direction. Allusion has already been made to the remark of Leslie Stephen that contempt for woman was one of the characteristics of the century. All

[1] The Green—or Vegetable—Market was formerly held in the northern half of the Square, now occupied by a cab-stand.

[2] *Shropshire Notes and Queries*, vol. vii. (1898), p. 74.

sense of chivalry seems to have been lost, and among other ways, this showed itself in the wave of illegitimacy which passed over the land. Any one who will study the Parish Registers of the county from about 1750 onward will find a record of illegitimate births far exceeding in number that of any other period.

But it must not be supposed that the century was all bad, and that society had in it no leaven of goodness. It was marked in Shrewsbury by two movements of philanthropy deserving of the highest praise. One was the foundation of what were known as 'Charity Schools' for the education of the poorer classes. No less than three such schools were founded in the town for this purpose. The first was that situated in Beeches Lane at the end of the existing town walls, which owed its origin to Thomas Bowdler, draper and alderman of the town, who died in 1724. Besides founding the school he was a great benefactor in other ways to St. Julian's Church and parish, his gifts including £200 for the increase of the living, a similar amount for the poor, and a large portion of the communion plate. Bowdler's example was followed ten years later by James Millington, draper, who founded the institution known as Millington's Hospital, in Frankwell,

already alluded to in connection with Thomas Podmore the Nonjuror. This included not only a school, but also almshouses for decayed inhabitants of that part of the town. The third school was founded near the close of the century under the will of John Allatt, who was chamberlain or treasurer of the Corporation for nearly forty years. It is at the top of St. John's Hill, near St. Chad's Church.

This philanthropic movement, it will be observed, was essentially a town movement both in its origin and purpose. The other alluded to had a wider basis. It was the foundation in 1747 of the Salop Infirmary. As early as 1737 a circular had been issued in which such an institution was proposed, but the matter was not proceeded with till 1744 when a second circular was issued, which met with such success that, two years after, the infirmary was opened in a large house which occupied the site of the present building.[1] This institution was one of which it would be difficult to exaggerate the importance and value to the sick poor of the whole town and county, but the mode devised for its support was very characteristic of the time. It was proposed that in addition to subscriptions there

[1] The present building was erected in 1830.

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should be an annual service in church with a special collection on its behalf. Now Shropshire is, and always has been, a great fox-hunting county, and though the 'Shrewsbury Hunt' was not founded till November 1769, it took the place of a similar society the annual meeting of which in 1753 was thus advertised: 'The Annual Meeting of True Blue will be held at the Raven Inn, in Shrewsbury, on Tuesday the 23rd of this instant October.—Richard Barry, Esq., Steward. A pack of Fox-hounds will go out on Wednesday the 24th inst., and a Ball for the Ladies at night.' Indeed, this connection between hunting and dancing was of much older standing. In Farquhar's *Recruiting Officer*, Sylvia, the principal heroine, says of herself: 'I can gallop all the morning after the hunting-horn, and all the evening after the fiddle.' Accordingly the hunt ball, in one form or other, has been a great social institution for probably little short of a couple of centuries. Some one suggested the happy thought that the day of the annual hunt ball should be utilised in the morning for the annual service on behalf of the infirmary, and this idea was adopted, with the result that some very characteristic arrangements were made. Those interested

in the institution met at the board-room and in company with the treasurer for the year, who was always chosen for his wealth and position in the county, walked in procession to St. Chad's Church, where a sermon was preached by some clergyman nominated by the treasurer. At the conclusion of the service the collection was made at the door, the plates being held by two young ladies previously chosen for the purpose, and each supported by a gentleman. The ladies were usually, one the latest bride of the county, and the other a *débutante* at the ball which followed in the evening. These ladies held the plates attired in their ball dresses, which must have been a trying process on a cold November morning. When the service was over there was a lunch, which after the rebuilding of St. Chad's Church used to be served in its spacious vestry, and the author has been told by old people that as the service drew to an end the preliminary popping of corks was not unfrequently audible. The wearing of ball dresses on the occasion, and the vestry lunch, have long since been changed, and various other modifications have been introduced into the service, but it is still held every November; and besides securing for the funds of the infirmary a

sum of from £200 to £300, it forms an interesting link with the past history of the town.

With regard to the hunt ball, several customs prevailed in its earlier days which have now disappeared. An old lady who died some twenty years ago told the author she remembered when it was the rule for the married ladies to wear red trimmed with white, and the unmarried white trimmed with red, as predominant colours.

And with regard to the gentlemen, the same idea of colours was carried out, not only in the red coats which they wore, but even in the envelopes in which they sent out invitations to their friends to be present at the ball: one set being furnished with red envelopes, and the other with white envelopes edged with red. Up to quite recent times every invitation also went out sealed with an imposing wax seal.

At the period we are contemplating, the large room at the back of the Lion Hotel, at the top of the Wyle Cop, was the Assembly Room of the town, and though it is now very little used, its mirrors and chandeliers still carry one back to the era of the Georges.

Some will remember the caustic words of Thack-

eray,[1] which, however, are only partially true of Shrewsbury: 'Every country town had its Assembly Room—mouldy old tenements which we may still see in deserted inn-yards in decayed provincial cities, out of which the great wen of London has sucked all the life. . . . Shrewsbury was celebrated for its festivities.' To these assemblies ladies went in their Sedan-chairs—of which a Salopian specimen may be seen in the museum—and from behind their fans they there exercised the powers of fascination of which a contemporary writer says: 'By means of these assemblies matches are struck up, and the officers of the army have had pretty good success when ladies are at their own disposal; as I know several instances about Worcester, Shrewsbury, Chester, Derby and York.'[2]

No better idea, however, can be given of society in the town at this period than is afforded by the following letter written by an Irish boy who was at Shrewsbury School boarding with Rev. S. Johnson, the second master. Its naturalness and boyish simplicity add to its value and interest. It is addressed to his mother, and dated December 27th, 1787.

[1] *Lectures on the Four Georges*—'George the Second.'

[2] *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, vol. i. p. 135.

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After relating how he had dined with his aunt, who apparently lived in the town, on Christmas Day, and had made the acquaintance of two gentlemen from Ireland, one of whom knew his father, he goes on: 'I saw the Earl of Portarlington on Monday with his lady go from the Lion in their own coach, which was so heavy that four horses were scarcely able to stir out of the Lion yard. But yesterday I saw more than this; it was Miss Pultney's birthday, and she was of age yesterday, so there was great rejoicings: the British ensign was display'd from the Mount before the Castle, where he lives, and the Jack from the top of the Castle, a flag was also displayed from the battlement of St. Mary's tower. An ox was roasted whole in the meadow behind our house, a sheep in the Raven street, and another before the Townhall (Papa knows all these places), and as much drink (strong beer) given out from the Castle as they asked for; besides two publick houses, which [were] open for any one to drink what they pleased, with flags displayed from the tops of them; at night the Raven street and Mount at the Castle were illuminated, and some houses here and there in the other parts of the town. Mr. Pultney also

gave a ball and supper at the Lion, to which he gave a general invitation in the newspaper: I got to the door of the Assembly room just in time to see Mr. and Miss P. get out of their coach. He looked very well last night and like a gentleman: I saw her for the first time; she is not very handsome, but I think she is a pretty-looking girl; she was (this is for Fanny) dressed in a kind of a chocolate-coloured sattin, trimmed with ermine, she seemed to me to have no hoop. They say she is to have £16,000 a year in her own possession now that she is at age. Last week [was] the Hunt week, too, when there were fine dinners at the Lion every day, a concert on Tuesday evening, and a ball on Thursday, when I went also to the door of the Assembly room to see the company go in, unknown to Mr. J., but Mrs. J. gave us leave. Well, I have told you enough of all this I believe.' He then sends various home messages to different members of his family, and concludes: 'You know (so well, I hope, that it is needless to repeat it) that I am, and ever shall be, your most affectionate son, W. L. B.'[1]

[1] *Shropshire Notes and Queries*, vol. v. p. 49. Quoted also in Fisher's *Annals of Shrewsbury School*, p. 255.

LION HOTEL

The Lion Hotel was celebrated for other reasons besides its Assembly Room. It was the principal coaching inn of the town; and it is unnecessary to say that, before the invention of railways, Shrewsbury was a great coaching centre. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the roads were so bad that the journey from Shrewsbury to London occupied the best part of a week by any wheeled

vehicle, but this was reduced to four days in the middle of the century, and by its close the roads were so much improved that this time was again halved; while by the end of another generation the famous 'Wonder' coach accomplished the journey in sixteen hours. Many are the coaching stories which were associated with the Lion, and the memory is still fresh that such punctuality was observed by the coach just mentioned that church clocks were regulated by its passing. It started exactly as St. Julian's clock began to strike five in the morning, and was in London by nine o'clock in the evening. The great promoter of coaching traffic through the town in the latter half of the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth was Robert Lawrence, whose tablet may still be seen on the south wall of St. Julian's Church. Part of the inscription expresses his merits as follows: 'Sacred to the memory of Mr. Robert Lawrence, many years proprietor of the Raven and Lion Inns in this town, to whose public spirit and unremitting exertions for upwards of thirty years, in opening the great road through Wales between the United Kingdoms, as also for establishing the first mail coach to this town, the public in general have been greatly in-

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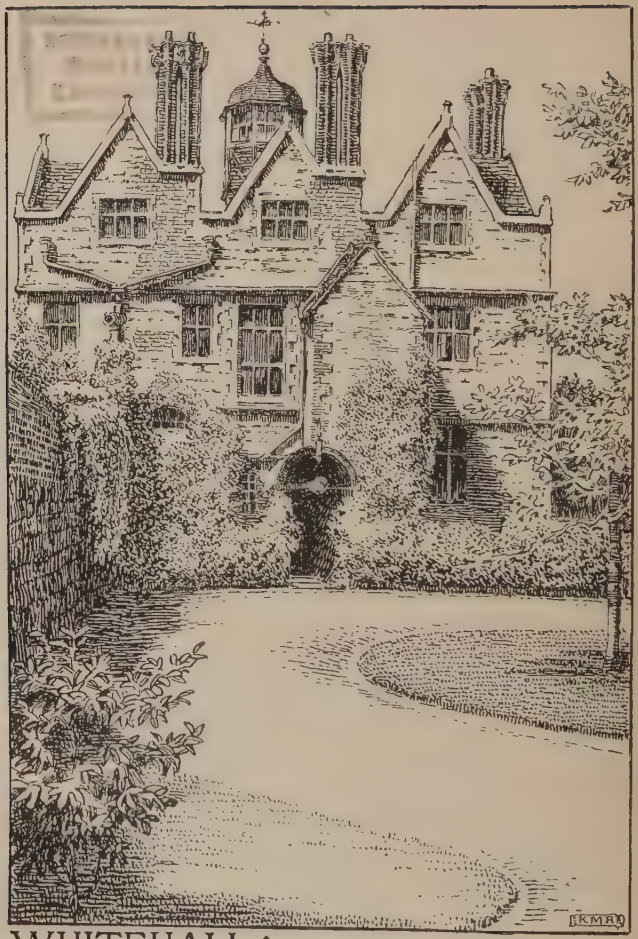
debted, and will long have to regret his loss. Died III September MDCCCVI, in the LVII year of his age.' In the churchyard of St. Julian's is also a tombstone to one who in a humbler sphere was not less a coaching celebrity than Lawrence. This was Samuel Hayward, who drove the London coach already mentioned for about sixteen years. His great feat was to bring the coach at full speed up the Wyle Cop, past the entrance into the Lion yard, and then, turning sharp round in the open space in front, take it at the same pace under the narrow archway. Any one acquainted with the spot will realise the skill involved in this feat, but it was Hayward's boast that he had done it for sixteen years without a single mishap, and that he had never been ten minutes late in his arrival. His gravestone lies in the centre of the path leading up to the principal entrance to the church, and the inscription is fast becoming obliterated. But he was laid there by his own request. It was his wish that his grave might be where people would walk over it as they went to and from church, hoping perhaps that they would thus bestow a passing thought on one whom all had known so well in life. He died in November 1851.

And now this chapter—which has already grown to disproportionate length—must come to a close. It has not dealt with the religious aspect of the period, and scarcely touched the moral; these, however interesting, are beyond the scope of this work, but the remark may be made in passing, that a good deal of light is thrown on these by a now forgotten book—the *Village Dialogues* of Rowland Hill, who was himself a Salopian. What strikes one most, however, in studying the life of the eighteenth century, is the distance which separates it from the beginning of the twentieth. There was of course change and progress during the period in question, but the progress was slow and the change was only within certain well-defined limits. The difference in the ordinary life of the people between the beginning of the eighteenth century and the close of the first quarter of the nineteenth was only one of degree, but then came a change which had no parallel in previous history. What we speak of as the Victorian era has witnessed not merely progress, but development in all sorts of new directions. As we send our messages far and wide by telegraph or telephone—as we steam from one end of the kingdom to the other in our express trains,

or drive our motor-cars along the broad roads which are one of the few good heritages which were the dying bequest of the period under consideration—as, in fact, we try to contrast our modern life in all its fulness of knowledge and political and social freedom, with the time when beaux in their full-bottomed wigs, and belles in their hoops, slowly moved from place to place in their coaches and four—when coarseness and unreality abounded on every side—we feel that the interval is one that cannot be measured by years. The difference between the reigns of George II. and Edward VII. is the difference not of a century, but rather of an age.

LOGGERHEADS INN, CHURCH STREET.



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CHAPTER X

SOME SPECIAL BUILDINGS—MORE ILLUSTRIOUS NATIVES AND VISITORS

OLD MARKET HALL

THE object of this chapter is to gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. There are a few edifices, public and private, which have not come into prominence in connection with the history of the town, but which deserve notice for the interest attaching to them as buildings; and there are a few noteworthy persons who have been more or less closely

associated with the town whose story has not weaved itself into the history as hitherto related.

The first building thus claiming attention is the Elizabethan mansion named the Whitehall. It is situated a short distance from the Abbey Church, and is reached in a few minutes from the Abbey Foregate by a street on the left known as Monkmoor Street, or from near the east end of the church by Whitehall Street. Its original name was Prince's Place, from the name of its builder, and it is a mansion of red sandstone. It appears, however, to have been whitewashed at an early period, in order, tradition says, to hide the fact that it was built with materials from the dissolved Abbey. Richard Prince, to whom its erection was due, was a native of the town, where his father lived near the Abbey Church, and is first mentioned in the reign of Edward VI., when the parish of Holy Cross made him a grant of two chambers situate over the north door of the parish church. Whatever might be the immediate object of this particular grant, we find him not long after possessed of a considerable amount of property in the Abbey Foregate which had belonged to the Abbey. He had adopted the profession of the law, and apparently made his profession a success. In 1578,

however, he had returned to his native town, and in that year he commenced the building of the present house. It was not completed till 1582, on which the Taylor MS. remarks: 'This yeare and in the moonthe of Marche 1582 the famus howse in the Abbe foryate in the towne of Shreusberie sytuate by a greate barne called the Abbott's barne was boylded by one Master Prynce Lawyar callid Master Prynes place the foondac'on began in Marche 1578 so was it iiij yeares in buyldinge to his great chardge with fame to hym and hys posterite for ever.' The interior has been modernised, but the exterior retains all the main features of the period when it was built. It possesses also a very interesting gatehouse, beside a dovecot, while the garden is distinguished by a remarkably fine walnut-tree, possibly coeval with the house itself. The Whitehall connects itself also with a Salopian poet—now known even by name to very few, but a voluminous writer, and of some note in his day—who was not only a contemporary of Prince, but added a note to one of his poems that 'Maister Prince his house stands so trim and finely that it graceth all the soyle it is in.' Thomas Churchyard was born at Shrewsbury in 1520, his father being apparently engaged in agriculture and 'of gentle blood

and manners, lacking only wealth,' and he lived till 1604. It would be impossible here to trace even in the barest outlines the adventures which were crowded into the eighty-four years of his life.[1] Commencing his career in the household of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, to whom he was greatly attached, we find him sometimes hanging round the Court, but more often engaged as a soldier of fortune. In this capacity he took part in most of the wars of the time, seeing service in Scotland, Ireland, the Netherlands, and France; experiencing all sorts of ups and downs of fortune, but always restless and unsettled. His solace under all circumstances seems to have been his pen. His productions, long and short, were more than sixty in number; some of them mere pamphlets, others large quarto volumes, some in prose and some in verse. Among others from whom he received notice as a writer was the poet Spenser, who described him under the name of Palæmon, in *Colin Clout*, as one

'That sang so long untill quite hoarse he grew.'

This description evidently rankled in Churchyard's

[1] Cf. an exhaustive paper on his life and works, by H. W. Adnitt, in Shropshire Archæol. Soc. *Transactions*, 1st Series, vol. iii. p. 1.

bosom, for he twice over alludes to it in different works. The book in which he makes most allusion to Shrewsbury is his 'Worthines of Wales: wherein are more than a thousand seuerall things rehearsed: some set out in prose to the pleasure of the Reader, and with such variety of verse for the beautifying of the Book as no doubt shall delight thousands to vnderstand.' This is only half the title-page, but will be sufficient for our readers. It was issued in 1587, and dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, who appears soon after to have bestowed on him a pension.

Some Special Buildings

When he arrived in 'auncient Shrewsebrie towne,' he says he found many new buildings erected since his last visit, but the people had improved: there were 'many well borne and rich.' And these gave attention to religion, 'To preaching still repayres both young and old.' He then proceeds to describe the buildings of the town: the three gates; the Castle situated so as to keep an eye on every street; the 'fower parish churches'; the river, flowing 'about the walles trim under goodly banks'; the Abbey with its peal of bells, and the Abbey Foregate, 'a long great streate, well builded large and faire,' approached by the 'Stonebridge'; and 'the auncient

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streete called Franckwell,' approached by the Welsh Bridge. His description of the Quarry may be given at greater length, as it contains several allusions which throw light on the period:—

'Behind the walles . . .
There is a ground new made theator wise,
Both deepe and hye, in goodly auncient guise:
Where well may sit ten thousand men at ease,
And yet the one the other not displease.

A space below to bayt both bull and beare;
For players too great roume and place at will,
And in the same a cockpit wondrous feare;
Besides where men may wrestle in their fill.

A ground moste apt, and they that sit above
At once in vewe all this may see for love:
At Aston's play,[1] who had beheld this then,
Might well have seen there twentie thousand men.

Fair Sevarne stream runs round about this ground,
Save that one side is closed with Shrewsebrie wall.'

He has also a good word to say for the customs of the place; the people were polite in their manner to strangers, and hospitable withal: 'Good house they keepe as cause doth serve therefore.'

Those who are acquainted with the town may

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 146.

College Public

perhaps notice that Churchyard makes no mention of one familiar edifice which they might expect him to mention—namely, the Old Market Hall in the Square. He had, however, the best possible reason for this omission, in the fact that it was not erected till nearly ten years after *The Worthines of Wales* was published. It is a noticeable building and well worthy of study as a specimen of a municipal building erected at the close of the sixteenth century. The style is that of the Renaissance with the usual mixture of debased Gothic and Classic details, but the general effect is imposing: the arches and parapet are especially characteristic. An inscription over the arch at the north end says:—'The xvth day of June was this building begonne, William Jones and Thomas Charlton, Gent., then Bailiffes, and was erected and covered in their time, 1595.' The few months which would intervene between June and the time when the bailiffs would go out of office (presumably in November) seems a very short time for its erection, but as 'the old building in the Corn Market place' was agreed to be taken down in the previous January, it may be supposed that all the materials were prepared in the earlier part of the year. Above the inscription just quoted, immediately

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under the clock, is the statue of Richard, Duke of York, father of Edward IV., which was removed from the old Welsh Bridge on its demolition in 1791, and has been already mentioned. This is flanked by an inscription recording this fact on the one side, and on the other the three leopards' heads, which are the arms of the town. On the other end of the building is a sundial, and also a sculptured angel holding a shield on which are the arms of England and France. This was removed from the gate of the town which stood at the foot of the Castle on its demolition in 1825. The principal entrance is on the west, and over this are the arms of Queen Elizabeth and the date 1596. It will be noticed that one of the supporters is not the unicorn but the red dragon of Wales. The interior is now partly devoted to various municipal offices, and partly used as the Mayor's Court, the roof of which still retains its old character. The business of the market has been transferred to the huge but tasteless building of brick erected at the top of Mardol in 1869. The building of this new Market Hall involved the destruction of several picturesque old houses, and several others disappeared or were remodelled in the half century preceding. The theatre, for example, erected in 1834, stands on

the site of Chorlton, or Charlton Hall, whose history went back to the times of the lords of Powis. The National Provincial Bank at the south end of the new Market Hall enshrines in a completely modernised form what was known as Bellstone House, one of the oldest houses in the town. It was erected by Edward Owen, who was bailiff in 1582, and derived its name from a large boulder still preserved in the Bank, and probably used originally as a boundary stone. In the same way the Music Hall in the Square, now the principal Assembly Room of the town, erected in 1840, was partly built on the site of a mansion known as Vaughan's Place, the hall of which remains and now forms part of the Music Hall premises. The old mansion of the Gibbons family still survives in a dilapidated condition at the back of the Wyle Cop, but modern houses have been built in front of it; and, as already mentioned, the front of Jones's Mansion, in which Prince Rupert stayed, has been partly obscured in the same way. One of the most interesting of the old houses is still nearly entire, but is now only used as a warehouse. This is Rowley's Mansion in Hill's Lane, which is a street turning out of Mardol on the left about half way down. The house, which is on the left side of the

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street, differs from all the houses just mentioned as being built of brick, and is said to be the first house built of that material in Shrewsbury. Its erection was due to William Rowley, and it is dated by the leaden pipes with which it was spouted, some of which are marked with 1618. William Rowley was a draper and apparently also a brewer, yet a Puritan withal and friend of Richard Baxter. On his death, the property, which was large, passed to his son Roger Rowley, who is said to have been the first person in Shrewsbury to keep his coach. The house, which is worthy of a better fate than now hangs over it, deserves careful examination as a specimen of early brickwork. It connects itself with the history of the town in another way. From Roger Rowley, just mentioned, it passed through his daughter to John Hill, from whom the name Hill's Lane is derived, and who is said to have been the original of one of the justices introduced by Farquhar into his *Recruiting Officer*. He was mayor in 1689, and died in 1731. At a later period the house was for some years the home of Dr. William Adams, Vicar of St. Chad's, already mentioned as the friend of Dr. Johnson. The part of the town approached by Hill's Lane was originally one of its most aristocratic

quarters, and not far from Rowley's Mansion, up a yard on the Mardol side of the Welsh Presbyterian Chapel, are the scanty remains of Cole Hall, which was the seat of the Coles or Colles, one of whom appears as the representative of the borough in Parliament as early as 1337. It was built of stone, at any rate in its lower storey, which is the only part now remaining. The important family of the Myttons had a town-house at Coton Hill, beyond the house in which Admiral Benbow was born. It occupied a very commanding position, and extensive buildings connected with it still remain.

Some Special Buildings

The other quarter of the town which contains most relics of antiquity is that approached by Butcher Row, which is a street leading out of Pride Hill not far below the Post Office and on the same side. The street derives its name from the fact that till within living memory all the butchers of the town were located within its limits. Passing along this street by a noticeable house which projects into the street on the right, we arrive at a very fine half-timbered edifice on the same side, which forms the corner block where the road turns down to Fish Street. This is traditionally the town-house of the Abbots of Lilleshall, but there is no record either of its builder or its

exact date. It is clearly, however, one of the oldest houses of the town, and whether originally built for business purposes or not, its lower storey affords a good specimen of mediæval shops. Near to this point are two interesting street views—one looking down Grope Lane to the Square beneath two old houses, which project almost to the point of meeting; the other looking along Fish Street between two old houses towards the tower of St. Julian's Church, which forms the end of the vista. Not far from St. Julian's Church, in Dogpole, is the 'Olde House,' which was the mansion of the Rocke family: Princess Mary Tudor is said to have stayed here when visiting Shrewsbury. Only two other houses demand special mention. They are opposite to each other at the end of High Street going towards Pride Hill. On the right is a gabled house half timbered, on which is the inscription—'Erected by Richard Owen the elder, gentelman, ano. dni. 1592'; and on the left, on the other side of the street, opposite to this mansion of the Owens, is that of the Irelands. It is specially noticeable by its range of bow windows, four storeys high, terminating in gables, and when it stood in its original surroundings must have been a specially imposing edifice. The Irelands appear

IRELAND'S MANSION

originally to have belonged to Oswestry, but one of them purchased in Henry VIII.'s reign the manor of Albrighton, which had belonged to Shrewsbury Abbey, and that became their principal residence. They continued, however, to take great interest in the town, and furnished more than one representative of it in Parliament. It is somewhat uncertain by whom the house was built, but it is attributed with some probability to Robert Ireland, who appears to

have been bailiff in 1579, and of whom the Taylor MS. says that he was 'a good howsekeeper and one that kepte good cowntenaunce in his proceedynges yn thys towne.' Another public building of a later date must be mentioned, not for its beauty or its intrinsic interest, but for the associations under which it was erected. This is the County Prison which adjoins the railway station. Originally the towers on the old bridges were used for this purpose, or at any rate this was the case with the English Bridge, as testified by the Taylor MS., which under the date 1545 speaks of a great flood which caused the 'Stoane gate' (by which name the English Bridge was then known), to fall, and 'beinge therin at the fall a prysonar for fellonye who was so woonderfully and myracuously savyd contrary to all p'sons expectta'con and dores and wynde's barryd and lockyd and also bolts on hys feate for the w'ch he was lett goe and pardonyd'; and half a century later the same fact is witnessed by the entry in St. Julian's Register: 'Aug. 27, 1600, Richard Carter, fletcher, died in the Stongate, buried.' This custom continued till the beginning of the eighteenth century, when, in 1705, a building was erected for the purposes of a gaol 'at the back of Castle Street behind the turning to School Lane.'

This appears to have been used without much change till the year 1782, when Shrewsbury received a visit from the great philanthropist John Howard, who had already been engaged for several years in inspecting the condition of prisons, and endeavouring to reform their abuses. His report on that of Shrewsbury was so unsatisfactory that efforts were made at once by the magistrates of the county to obtain an Act of Parliament for the erection of a new one. This was done in 1786, and the building was completed in 1793. Howard paid a second visit to the town while it was in process of building, and appears to have made suggestions as to the work. He was honoured by the placing of his bust over the entrance gateway, where it may still be seen. The building has been enlarged and improved internally in recent years, but a gaol is not beautiful under any aspect.

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In noticing private houses, it may be mentioned in passing that that in which Charles Darwin was born in 1809 is a large modern house situated at the Mount at the top of Frankwell.

Any detailed account of this distinguished Salopian of modern days does not fall within the compass of this story of an ancient town; but we have not exhausted the record of illustrious men who belonged

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to the generations long past and were associated with Shrewsbury. To begin with the best known of all: John Wesley paid many preaching visits to Shrewsbury, one main attraction to the place being its proximity to Madeley, of which his friend Fletcher was vicar. As many as eighteen visits are recorded in his Journal between 1761 and 1790. The first time was in March of the first-mentioned year, when he 'found the door of the place where he was to preach surrounded by a numerous mob: part of them came in; almost all that did (a large number) behaved quietly and seriously.' If, as tradition says, his preaching-place was in a house still existing at the bottom of Fish Street, near St. Julian's Church, it is difficult to see how any large number of people could find accommodation either inside or out. His second visit was just a year later, in March 1762, and his description throws light not only on his preaching work, but on the conditions under which journeys were made in those days. He says: 'I took horse [from Hereford] at six with William Crane and Francis Walker. The wind was piercing cold, and we had many showers of snow and rain; but the worst was, part of the road was scarce passable; so that, at Church Stretton, one of our horses lay down

and would go no farther. However, William Crane and I pushed on, and before seven reached Shrewsbury. A large company quickly gathered together: many of them were wild enough; but the far greater part were calm and attentive, and came again at five in the morning.' From Shrewsbury on this occasion he went on to Wem, and a friend volunteered to send him and his companion there in a postchaise. The result, however, was disastrous: the road was so bad that the chaise stuck fast, and the horses broke their traces in endeavouring to extricate it; so that it was only after considerable difficulty and delay that he reached Wem; and he then found that 'the person who had invited him was gone; gone out of town at four in the morning; and he could find no one who seemed either to expect or desire his company.' Wesley's other visits to Shrewsbury present no points of special interest, unless it be that both in 1779 and 1781 he mentions seeing the new Iron Bridge over the Severn, near Broseley, which was completed in the interval between these two visits. His comment provokes a smile as we read it now: 'I suppose the first and the only one in Europe: it will not soon be imitated.'

More Illustrious Natives and Visitors

It may be convenient to go slightly out of chronological order to contrast with Wesley's impressions

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY HOUSE ON BELMONT

of Shrewsbury those of a very different man—William Cobbett. Both were alike in visiting the town on horseback, but while Wesley came with a gospel of peace, Cobbett came to lecture as a political agitator, and his language was often wild and exaggerated. His visit took place in 1830, during a period when the country was passing through a time of great depression, and was made in the course of one of

those 'Rural Rides' which for several years he made up and down the country. Salopians may take it as a compliment that while he pours vials of unmitigated wrath on many places, he has nothing but good to say of Shrewsbury. The following is his account: 'Shrewsbury is one of the most interesting spots that man ever beheld. It is the capital of the county of Salop, and Salop appears to have been the original name of the town itself. It is curiously enclosed by the river Severn, which is here large and fine, and which, in the form of a horseshoe, completely surrounds it, leaving, of the whole of the two miles round, only one little place whereon to pass in and out on land. There are two bridges, one on the east, and the other on the west; the former called the English, and the other the Welsh, bridge. The environs of this town, especially on the Welsh side, are the most beautiful that can be conceived. The town lies in the midst of a fine agricultural country, of which it is the great and almost only mart. Hither come the farmers to sell their produce, and hence they take in exchange their groceries, their clothing, and all the materials for their implements and the domestic conveniences. It was fair-day when I arrived at Shrewsbury.' He then goes into

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a great number of details as to the consumption of various articles and their prices, adding his own ideas as to the remedies for the prevailing decline. He concludes as follows: 'I cannot quit Shrewsbury without expressing the great satisfaction that I derived from my visit to that place. It is the only town into which I have gone in all England, without knowing beforehand something of some person in it. I could find out no person that took the *Register* [his political organ]; and I could discover but one person who took the *Advice to Young Men* [another of his works]. The number of my auditors was expected to be so small, that I doubled the price of admission, in order to pay the expense of the room. To my great surprise, I had a room full of gentlemen, at the request of some of whom I repeated the dose the next night; and if my audience were as well pleased with me as I was with them, their pleasure must have been great indeed.'

Cobbett's mention of the Severn as being 'large and fine' at Shrewsbury is a reminder that up to the time of his writing, and for some years after, the river was not only a picturesque stream, but a great highway for merchandise. Heavy goods were brought up from Bristol and the intervening towns in barges,

which were known as *Trows*, a memory of which survives in the not uncommon surname of Trowman. They were boats with a sail, and may be seen depicted in several of the old engravings of the town. They landed their goods at quays in various parts of the river bank, several of which still exist—as for example, one may be seen at the bottom of Mardol, and another below the Water Gate. An owner of trows was a man of some importance, and the profits were considerable; but it was a trade which died out with the advent of railways, and the river has now ceased to be navigable for such craft.

It may be convenient here to add the later history of the Quarry, which Churchyard described as it existed in his time, and to which an old poem declares the river just mentioned gives a soul. It was at first known as 'Behind the Walls,' and, as Churchyard intimates, was used for various sports and entertainments. In 1569 it was let on lease to certain persons for ten years at a nominal rent, on condition of their bringing to the town from a spring some three miles away the drinking water which forms the supply of the inhabitants to this day. After this it reverted to the Corporation, and was let out in pasture for the benefit of the burgesses. The pleasant walk at

the bottom by the riverside has been already alluded to in connection with Farquhar's play, and from this three walks led into the town. It was in 1719 that the lower walk was planted with the avenue of lime-trees which are now such an ornament, and the other walks were treated in the same way a few years later. The planting in 1719 was done by Thomas Wright, a noted nurseryman at that date, and it forms the subject of what Miss Burne in her *Shropshire Folk-lore* describes as probably the youngest of the legends of the county.[1] It may best be given in her own words: 'Thomas Wright was a famous nurseryman in old days. He had made a large fortune by his trade, and wished to spend some of it in benefiting the town of Shrewsbury. He therefore proposed to plant the Quarry with trees, but the Mayor and Corporation were old-fashioned people, and refused to allow any change to be made. But Wright would not be gainsaid. He was a man who knew more than most people, and understood a good deal about conjuring and that sort of thing. He was determined that the Quarry should be planted, and by means of his magic he managed, with only two men to help him, to plant all the trees in a single night, and

[1] *Shropshire Folklore*, p. 101.

when the Mayor got up in the morning, the thing was done. But even he was obliged to own that the work was a great improvement, and it was therefore allowed to remain.' It is almost a pity to destroy the poetry of the legend by putting alongside of it the prose of an entry in the Orders of the Corporation: 'Jan. 15th (1719). Agreed that there be a handsome walk made in the Quarry for persons to walk in, and that trees be planted in the same, in such manner as Mr. Mayor shall think most ornamental.' It may be remarked that the name is derived from stone having been quarried in early times in the hollow which afterwards came to be known, as it is now, by the name of the Dingle. The Quarry is one of the features of Shrewsbury which most impresses the ordinary visitor. Few towns possess a public park which in any way rivals it: only the 'backs' of the Colleges at Cambridge present the same combination of avenues and river, but they want the undulations of the Quarry.

We must now go back a century to speak of a visitor to Shrewsbury whose name as an author was well known fifty years ago, but is now nearly forgotten—Thomas Day, author of *The History of Sandford and Merton.* His association with Shrewsbury

was highly eccentric and amusing. Day, who was born in 1748 and died in 1789, was essentially a man of theories, and was an admirer of Rousseau, though himself a man of nobler type. Among the theories to which Rousseau had given utterance was one that the faults of mankind were due to education, and that the remedy lay in training children apart from the world so that they might grow up in their natural simplicity. Day admired this theory and determined to try it for himself.

At that time the building which now forms the principal block of the premises belonging to Shrewsbury School on Kingsland had lately been erected as a country branch of the London Foundling Hospital, and contained something like four hundred orphans. The rest of the story cannot be told better than in the words of Day's biographer, as quoted by Archdeacon Owen in his *Account of the Ancient and Present State of Shrewsbury*: 'The most singular of these projects [imbibed from Rousseau] was an experiment on female education in which he proposed to unite the purity of female virtue with the fortitude and hardiness of a Spartan virgin, and with a simplicity of taste that should despise the frivolous vanities, the effeminate manners, the dissipated plea-

sures, which, according to Rousseau's declamation, constitute the characters of the present age. There was no finding such a creature ready made; philosophical romance could not hope it. He must mould some infant into the being his fancy had imagined. With this view Mr. Day, attended by his friend Mr. Bicknel, a barrister, journied to Shrewsbury to explore the Foundling Hospital. From the little train, Mr. Day, in the presence of Mr. Bicknel, selected two girls of twelve years each; both beautiful; one fair with flaxen locks, and light eyes; her he called Lucretia. The other, a clear auburn brunette, with darker eyes, more glowing bloom, and chesnut tresses, he called Sabrina. These girls were obtained on written conditions for the performance of which Mr. Bicknel was guarantee. They were to this effect, that Mr. Day should, within the twelvemonth after taking them, resign one into the protection of some respectable tradeswoman, giving one hundred pounds to bind her apprentice; maintaining her if she behaved well till she married, or began business for herself. Upon either of these events he promised to advance four hundred pounds more. He avowed his intention of educating the girl he should retain, with a view to make her his future

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wife; solemnly engaged never to violate her innocence; and if he should renounce his plan, to maintain her decently in some creditable family, till she married, when he promised five hundred pounds as her wedding portion.

'Mr. Day went instantly into France with these girls; not taking an English servant, that they might receive no ideas except those which himself might choose to impart. They teased and perplexed him; they quarrelled; they sickened of the small-pox; they chained him to their bedside by crying if they were ever left alone with any person who could not speak English. He was obliged to sit up with them many nights; to perform for them the lowest offices of assistance. They lost no beauty by their disease. Soon after they had recovered, crossing the Rhone with his wards in a tempestuous day, the boat overset. Being an excellent swimmer, he saved them both, though with difficulty and danger to himself. Mr. Day came back to England in eight months. Sabrina was become the favourite. He placed Lucretia with a chamber milliner. She behaved well, and became the wife of a respectable linen draper in London. With Sabrina he actually proceeded during some years in the execution of his

favourite project. The experience which had at first been wanting to him, at length gave him convincing proofs of the impracticability of this mode of education, while his acquired knowledge of mankind suggested doubts of its expediency, and after a series of fruitless trials, Mr. Day renounced all hope of moulding Sabrina into the being his imagination had formed. Finding himself obliged to relinquish his project of forming Rousseau's children of nature in the centre of England, he nevertheless continued these children under his protection and maintenance; ceasing to behold Sabrina as his wife, he placed her at a boarding-school at Sutton Coldfield, in Warwickshire. She remained at school three years; gained the esteem of her instructress, grew feminine, elegant, and amiable. When Sabrina left school, Mr. Day allowed her fifty pounds annually. She boarded some years near Birmingham, and afterwards at Newport in Shropshire. Wherever she resided, wherever she paid visits, she secured to herself friends. Beautiful and admired, she passed the dangerous interval between sixteen and twenty-five, without one reflection upon her conduct, one stain upon her discretion. Mr. Day corresponded with her parentally, but seldom saw her, and never

without witnesses. In her twenty-sixth year she married Mr. Bicknel, the same gentleman who had accompanied him to Shrewsbury.' It is said that one method which Mr. Day used to try in his efforts to train Sabrina in the 'fortitude and hardiness of a Spartan virgin' was to drop hot sealing-wax on her arm, or fire off a gun in unexpected proximity to her ear, but that all his endeavours failed to bring her to the point of not uttering a scream whenever the experiment was tried!

Another author who was a frequent visitor to the town belonged to a different class. This was Thomas Percy, the editor of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. He was a Salopian by birth, being born in 1729 at Bridgnorth, where, in the lower part of the town near the Severn Bridge, is still to be seen the half-timbered house in which he first saw the light. Entering Holy Orders, he served various cures until he became Dean of Carlisle, and from that post was promoted to the Bishopric of Dromore in Ireland in 1782. Here he remained till his death in 1811, but he became blind towards the close of his life. He never ceased to take a deep interest in antiquarian pursuits, of which his *Reliques* were the firstfruits, and he was especially keen on matters connected with his native county.

SHREWSBURY FROM CLAREMONT HILL

When he spent any time in Shrewsbury it was as the guest of the Blakeways: first of Rev. Edward Blakeway, Vicar of St. Mary's, and then of his nephew, Rev. John Brickdale Blakeway, who succeeded his uncle in 1794. This latter was the joint-author, with Archdeacon Owen, then Vicar of St. Julian's, of the *History of Shrewsbury*, published in two quarto

volumes in 1825, which still remains the standard work on the subject, and to which every subsequent writer—including the present author—will lie under a deep obligation. Bishop Percy kept up a regular correspondence for many years with the Blakeways, uncle and nephew, and most of the letters on both sides have been preserved. These letters, as well as a manuscript sermon of Bishop Percy's, are now in the possession of the present author, and it is clear from a study of them that the history owed some of its success to hints given in the first instance by the Bishop of Dromore.

In times gone by, as at present, Shrewsbury proved an attraction to artists. One such must be mentioned, namely, Paul Sandby. He was born at Nottingham in 1725, and was one of the original members of the Royal Academy on its formation in 1768. Before this he was for some time a draughtsman of the survey of the Highlands undertaken after the Rebellion of 1745, and he subsequently held the office of drawing-master to the Royal Military School at Woolwich, and became a fashionable teacher of painting. He was the inventor, or at any rate the great improver, of aquatint engraving. He must have paid frequent visits to Shrewsbury, for his

drawings included a large number of Salopian and Welsh views, most of which are familiar from old engravings. Indeed, we are largely indebted to him for our knowledge of some of the old features of the town. Among the best of his water-colours are three views of the old Welsh Bridge and one of the English, which adorn the Antiquities Room of the Shrewsbury Museum. These were painted about 1775. He died in 1809.

We turn now to a Salopian, belonging to a very different profession, and more closely connected with the town. The men of Shropshire in every period of its history have been good soldiers. This has been abundantly shown in the course of this book, and one of the most distinguished has still to be mentioned. Just as Lord Clive's illustrious career was drawing to a close, there was born on August 11th, 1772, one who was destined to take up the mantle of military distinction which was about to fall from Clive's shoulders. This was Rowland Hill, second son of Sir John Hill, Bart., of Hawkstone, and nephew of the eccentric Rev. Rowland Hill already mentioned as the author of *Village Dialogues*. The boy in question entered the army at fifteen, and was a captain by the time he was twenty. He served

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under Sir Ralph Abercromby in the Egyptian campaign of 1801, and was wounded at Aboukir. He gained his chief distinction, however, in the Peninsular War under Wellington between 1808 and 1814. Throughout this period he was that commander's right hand, and his renown became only less than that of Wellington himself. One of his greatest exploits was the capture of the forts of Almarez in 1813, for which he was rewarded by being raised to the peerage as Baron of Almarez and Hawkstone. When the escape of Napoleon from Elba called the English army again into activity in 1815, Hill once more took command under Wellington, and was present at the battle of Waterloo. Here he headed the brigade which at the last charge swept the Old Guard of the French Emperor off the field, and he was second in command of the army which occupied France after that battle. He succeeded Wellington as commander-in-chief in 1828, an office which he resigned in 1842, when he was made a viscount. He died unmarried the same year. During the time that he was inflicting his heaviest blows on the French in the Peninsula, his eccentric uncle was winning fame as a preacher in London. The contrast produced the following epigram in one of the

local newspapers: the general was at that time Sir Rowland:—

> 'Surely old Rowland and Sir Rowland Hill,
> Have done enough to gain the world's goodwill:
> Each in his calling makes our foes retrench—
> One thumps the cushion, t'other thumps the French.'

It was only to be expected that Shrewsbury and the county would be proud of their hero. Accordingly, following the fashion of the time, they determined to erect a column to his honour. With that object a prominent site was chosen at the entrance of the town from the London road at the top of the Abbey Foregate, not far from St. Giles's Church, and in the December of 1814 the first stone of the column was laid: the last was added on June 18th, 1816, the first anniversary of Waterloo. Its total height, including the statue which is 17 feet, exceeds 133 feet, and at the time of its erection it was boasted to be 'the largest Grecian Doric column in the world.' On three sides of the pedestal are inscriptions. That on the south side is a neatly turned Latin inscription: 'Is in re militari quemadmodum se gesserit Testes sint Lusitania, Hispania, Galliæ Narbonensis ac Belgica, Arturius Dux a

Wellington, Sociorum et quidem Hostium exercitus.' On the north side is one in English stating that the town and county of Salop have erected this column and statue 'As a memorial of their respect and gratitude to an illustrious contemporary, and an incitement to emulation in the heroes and patriots of future ages.' On the east side is a list of his principal victories. A full-length portrait of the general also adorns the walls of the Grand Jury Room at the Guildhall.

We pass to another illustrious contemporary whose career differed from Lord Hill's in every possible respect—a Salopian, but one whose origin was humble, and whose life was spent mainly in seats of learning and amid 'cloistered calm.' This was Samuel Lee, the eminent Orientalist. He was born at Longnor, about six miles from Shrewsbury, in 1783, and apprenticed to a carpenter in the village, with whom he worked till he was seventeen without any particular incident. At that time, however, he was employed in building a Roman Catholic chapel at Acton Burnell, in connection with which he saw Latin books, and heard that language read. This determined him to teach himself Latin, which he did by the purchase, one at a time, of a grammar and

various authors. As his wages at this time were only six shillings a week his efforts in the direction of learning involved no little self-denial, and he often went with a scant allowance of food. Being now out of his apprenticeship, he worked at his trade, but proceeded to learn Greek in the same way. From this he proceeded to Hebrew, Chaldaic, Syriac, and Samaritan. By this time he was five-and-twenty, and having decided to marry, he determined to give up his studies, and accordingly sold his books. Two circumstances, however, happened to prevent his becoming simply a journeyman carpenter. The first was an attack of inflammation of the eyes, which brought him under the notice of a Shrewsbury medical man. This was a Dr. Dugard who, finding that Lee was in the habit of reading by fire-light, made some inquiries about his studies, and was astonished to find what they were. The other circumstance was the burning of his chest of carpenter's tools in an accidental fire at a house in Worcestershire where he was working. This brought him into sore straits financially, but in the meantime Dr. Dugard had interested himself on his behalf with various friends, particularly Archdeacon Corbett, who lived at Longnor, and through his influence

Shrewsbury

Lee was appointed master of Bowdler's School, Shrewsbury. The story of his early difficulties up to this point is told in an extant letter, dated April 26th, 1813, which he wrote to Jonathan Scott, who had been Persian interpreter to Warren Hastings, and who assisted Lee in his further progress in Oriental languages. He had now found his groove, and the rest of his career may be told in few words. In the autumn of the same year he was enabled to go up to Cambridge, where in due course he graduated. In 1819 he was appointed Professor of Arabic in that University, and twelve years later, Professor of Hebrew. Meanwhile he had taken Holy Orders, and rendered valuable assistance to various societies in connection with the translation of the Bible into the languages of the East. He died in 1852. Shrewsbury possesses two memorials of him: in the Museum among the pictures which adorn the walls of the Natural History Room is his portrait in oils, and there is a small engraving from the same portrait in the Lower Room of Bowdler's School.

Some mention must be made of a Salopian who, as a boy, was more run after than almost any one in England, but has now almost passed into oblivion.

This was the juvenile actor, William Henry West Betty, who is better known as the 'Young Roscius.' He was not the first actor whom the neighbourhood of Shrewsbury produced. As far back as the days of Elizabeth, when Shakespeare himself was writing for the stage, there had been born at Condover one who became supreme in low comedy. This was Richard, or as commonly known, Dick Tarleton, who was brought under the queen's notice by the Earl of Leicester, and became one of her Twelve Players, his principal duty in that capacity being to amuse her Majesty when at supper. He evidently possessed great powers of mimicry, and had a face which set his audience laughing before he opened his mouth. Fuller declares that he was able to cure the queen of melancholy better than all her physicians. A contemporary woodcut[1] gives a good idea of the man he was, and it is pleasant to think that with his power of making others ridiculous, all his contemporary writers speak kindly of him. He is said to have been the original of Shakespeare's Yorick. He died in 1588, probably of the plague; for he made his will, died, and was buried in one day, and was interred in Shoreditch churchyard.

[1] Reproduced in Chambers's *Book of Days*, vol. ii. p. 307.

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Camden gives his epitaph as follows: 'Hic situs est . . . cujus poterat vox, actio, vultus, ex Heraclito reddere Democritum.' To return, however, to William Henry Betty. He was born within the limits of Shrewsbury itself, and first saw the light in 1791. His *rôle* as an actor was the opposite of Tarleton's, his principal characters being tragic and heroic, but his extreme popularity arose from his boyhood at the time. When he was only ten years old he happened to see Mrs. Siddons act at Belfast, whereupon he declared that he would die if he were not allowed to become an actor. His wish was granted, and he made his first appearance at Belfast before he had completed his twelfth year. He was hailed as 'an infant Garrick,' and when he removed in the following year to London all the town went mad over him. His principal characters were Shakespearian — Romeo, Hamlet, and Macbeth being among them — but his *repertoire* included others from plays now little known. He paid a visit to Shrewsbury in 1804, the same year in which he appeared in London, and delivered an address which was believed at the time to have been written by Dr. Butler, who was then head-master of the school. After alluding to various

characters in which he appeared, and a complimentary appeal to the 'Salopian Fair,' 'for Beauty's smile surpasses all applause,' he concluded as follows:—

> 'Whate'er the place—whate'er the mimic part—
> Still he 's a true Salopian in his heart;
> And thus he prays, May every blessing crown
> His kind supporters in his native town.' [1]

He made his last appearance as a boy actor in 1805, and the following year went up to Cambridge as a Fellow-Commoner of Christ's College. He returned to the stage in 1812, but as a man he met with only indifferent success, and in 1824 he followed the example of the great master, Shakespeare himself, and retired into the country to enjoy an ample fortune which was mainly the reward of his own exertions. For the rest of his life he was satisfied with the *rôle* of a private gentleman, and died in 1874 at the ripe age of eighty-two.

The story of illustrious men who had close connection with Shrewsbury might be extended con-

[1] *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, vol. i. p. 29.

siderably further, but a short notice of only two or three more must suffice.

Job Orton was a name well known in the religious world, especially in Dissenting circles, a few years ago. He is chiefly remembered as the biographer of Dr. Doddridge. It is not so generally known that he was born in Shrewsbury and educated at the school, and that he was minister for about fifteen years of the chapel in High Street. He retired from that post in 1766, and spent the remainder of his life at Kidderminster; but when he died in 1783 he directed that he should be buried in St. Chad's Church, Shrewsbury, in the grave where rested the remains of John Bryan who had been one of the founders of the chapel over which he had presided. At a later period—in 1798—the pulpit of the same chapel was filled for a short time by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and it has been asserted that during the few weeks he spent in Shrewsbury he composed the *Ancient Mariner*. This is probably incorrect; but there is a story that he read the poem in manuscript at a supper-party in the town, and became so excited over it that he at last rushed out of the house without his hat, and was captured bare-headed by a watchman as he crossed the English

Bellarian Public Library

Bridge.[1] At the same period there was engaged in the county on work of a very different kind one to whom a debt of gratitude is due from all who travel. This was Thomas Telford, whom Southey punningly described as 'Pontifex maximus' and the 'Colossus of Roads.' He was for some time county surveyor for Salop, and constructed the Ellesmere Canal with its wonderful aqueducts over the valleys of the Ceiriog and the Dee. He is, however, locally best known as engineer of the great London and Holyhead road which passes through Shrewsbury, and included the Suspension Bridge over the Menai Straits. It is not generally known that the iron for this structure was made at a forge in the neighbourhood of Shrewsbury — between Upton Magna and Wroxeter—which can now only be traced by a few cinders and the blackened soil. Telford was the first President of the Institute of Civil Engineers, and on his death in 1834 was buried in Westminster Abbey. A portrait of him will be found in the Natural History Room of the Shrewsbury Museum.

And so the roll might be continued to strictly modern times; for men like Charles Darwin, already

[1] *Byegones*, vol. ii. p. 135.

alluded to, and like Bishop Walsham How, who only died in 1897, but whose praise is in all the churches for his work in East London, still shed renown on the old town of their birth or their adoption. But what has been said must suffice. The taunt has been often flung at Shrewsbury that it is behind the times and slow to move forward, and the taunt will no doubt often be repeated in years still to come, but it is well that a few districts of the country still survive where modernness does not reign supreme, and which still retain something of local colouring. It has been the author's lot to spend considerably more than thirty years of ministerial life either in Shrewsbury itself or its immediate neighbourhood, and during that time he has had unusual opportunities of becoming acquainted with both the past and the present of Salopian life; the result is warm attachment both to the town and county. In the preceding pages he has tried to bring out something of the glories that have found their centre in Shrewsbury in times gone by, and if their perusal awakens increased interest in its history and assists visitors to study more easily the relics in which much of that history is enshrined, he will have had his reward. May nothing happen

in the future to mar the great record of the past. 'Salopia floruit'—'Floreat Salopia.'

More Illustrious Natives and Visitors

TOWN ARMS

APPENDIX

ITINERARY

HOUSE WHERE MARY TUDOR STAYED

A GLANCE at the map of Shrewsbury shows not only its main position within the embrace of the Severn, but also the main lines of its streets. It will be observed that it has two main arteries. One under the names of Castle Gates, Castle Street, Pride Hill, Shoplatch, and St. John's Hill leads almost in a straight line from the railway station to the Quarry. The other starts from the Welsh Bridge, and under the name of Mardol leads first to Shoplatch and the New Market Hall, and then making a slight angle crosses the other main artery, and under the names of High Street and Wyle Cop leads down to the English Bridge. The space within the circuit of the river is thus divided

into four quarters, and the objects of interest may be conveniently grouped under these divisions. Beginning, then, at the railway station, the quarter of the town on the visitor's left as he faces the hill first engages attention. Immediately over him frowns the Castle (p. 49), though the entrance is farther on, near the modern Presbyterian Chapel of St. Nicholas. Half-way up the hill are the Dana steps which lead to H.M. Prison (p. 260). Leaving the Free Library on the right, the stranger's attention is again arrested on the left by the half-timbered gateway leading to the Council House (p. 116). A little farther on, opposite the Raven Hotel, is the turn which leads to the Infirmary (p. 233), below which stood the house of the Dominican Friars (p. 92), and also the lane leading down the hill to the Water Gate (p. 171). Opposite the Infirmary is St. Mary's Church (p. 56). Nearly opposite the south porch is the half-timbered hall of the Drapers' Gild (p. 135), and opposite its west end, adjoining the modern Drapers' Almshouses to their left, and stretching along Church Street, is the house in which Prince Rupert stayed (p. 167). This street leads to St. Alkmund's Church (p. 62), and that of St. Julian which adjoins it (p. 60). A flight of steps to the north-west of St. Alkmund's leads down into Fish Street and Grope Lane (p. 258), while a turn to the right from the end of Church Street leads into Butcher Row (p. 257), and thence back to Pride Hill. The street known as Dogpole which leads past the west end of St. Mary's, contains the house (now solicitors' offices) in which Princess Mary Tudor stayed (p. 258).

Passing into the second quarter of the town, viz., that bounded by Shoplatch and St. John's Hill on one side, and by High Street and the Wyle Cop on the other, the

Shrewsbury

FIREPLACE IN HOUSE WHERE MARY TUDOR STAYED

most important spot is the Square. This contains the Old Market Hall (p. 253), the statue of Lord Clive (p. 225), and also the modern Guildhall, and the Music Hall (p. 255). Immediately adjoining, in High Street, are Owen's Mansion (p. 258), and Ireland's Mansion (p. 258), standing opposite to each other, and a little farther along the same street beyond the Guildhall is High Street Chapel (p. 177). At the other end of the Square, near the modern Working Men's Hall, the narrow thoroughfare of Princess Street leads to the open space where are to be seen the remaining fragment of the old Church of St. Chad (p. 67) and its crypt (p. 67). Turning at this point to the left along Milk Street, St. Julian's Church is seen immediately in front, and turning to the right underneath the churchyard wall of that edifice, the visitor finds himself at the top of the steep hill known as the Wyle Cop, and close to the Lion Hotel (p. 240). On the slope of the hill just below the Lion stands the house in which Henry VII. slept on his way to Bosworth (p. 114), and farther down are other half-timbered houses. At the bottom of the hill a street to the right (St. Julian's Friars) leads to the remains of the house of the Greyfriars (p. 93), while the Wyle Cop itself is bounded by the English Bridge, from which the Abbey Church is seen at no great distance. Returning to the top of St. Julian's Friars, a street known as Beeches Lane leads past Bowdler's School (p. 232) and

the recently erected Roman Catholic School, on to what remains of the town walls (p. 45). A conspicuous object on the right is the Roman Catholic Cathedral erected in 1856 from the designs of A. W. Pugin. Farther on is the only remaining tower of the old wall, and passing this the visitor finds himself at the end of St. John's Hill, having on his left the road leading to the Kingsland Bridge, which is flanked by the Girls' High School and the Eye and Ear Hospital, on his right Allatt's School (p. 233), and in front the present church dedicated to St. Chad (p. 69).

The third quarter of the town includes the Quarry, which at the point arrived at stretches below the spectator as far as the river (p. 267), while beyond it on the opposite hill the buildings of Shrewsbury School are a conspicuous object (p. 153). Passing, however, for the present along St. Chad's Terrace, the steep descent of Claremont Bank leads to the site of the settlement of the Austin Friars (p. 94). Here we are close to the Welsh Bridge, but turning back up Mardol we pass several good specimens of old houses. About half-way up on the right is the narrow street called Hill's Lane, which contains Cole Hall (p. 257) and Rowley's Mansion (p. 255) as well as other relics of a grandeur long passed away. Returning to Mardol, the New Market Hall is in front, and turning at the top of the street along Pride Hill towards the station, the fourth quarter of the town is on the visitor's left. Here, adjoining the premises of Lloyds' Bank, the old street of Roushill leads down to the river valley, and a little farther on is the passage or 'shut,' at the bottom of which is the fragment of Bennett's Hall, in which, according to tradition, Charles I.'s Mint was located (p. 161). From

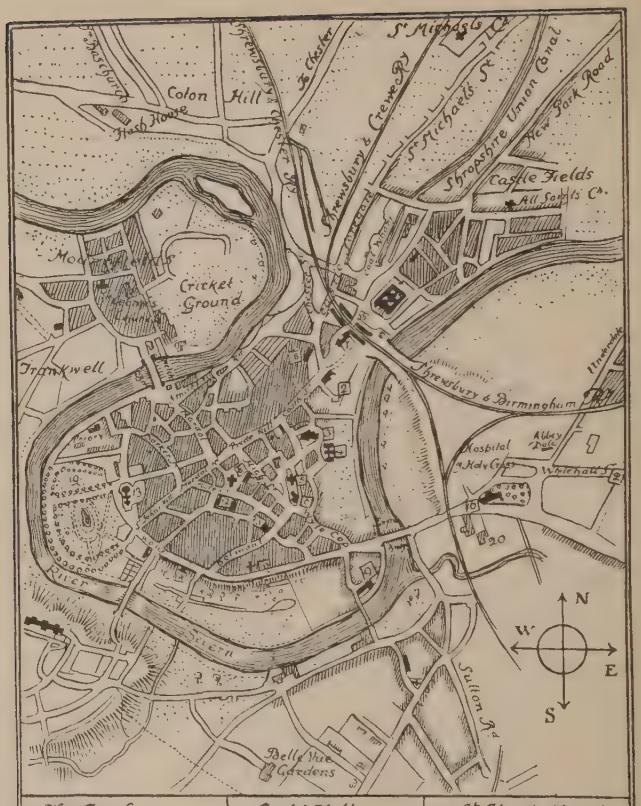
this point almost as far as the present Free Library the houses on the left of Pride Hill are built on the line of the town wall, and in the basements of some of them are to be traced fragments of the old work. A good idea of how the fortifications ran may be formed by walking from the Welsh Bridge along the Smithfield Road to the station. Here the visitor is again close to the Free Library and Museum, which were formerly the buildings of Shrewsbury School (p. 147).

Outside the circuit of the river are the suburbs of Coton Hill and the Castle Foregate, approached from the railway station; of Frankwell, over the Welsh Bridge; of Kingsland, over the new iron bridge near the Quarry; and of the Abbey Foregate, over the English Bridge. In the first of these, on the way to Coton Hill near the river, is the house in which Admiral Benbow was born (p. 190), and farther on the remains of the house of the Myttons (p. 257). The Castle Foregate Road—which runs under the railway bridge—leads, at a distance of about three miles, to Battlefield Church, the site of the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403 (p. 109). In Frankwell are a considerable number of old half-timbered houses worth inspection, including the 'String of Horses' (p. 138). It also includes Millington's Hospital (p. 232), and the modern house in which Charles Darwin was born (p. 261). About two miles along this road is Shelton Oak, traditionally associated with Owen Glyndwr and the battle of Shrewsbury (p. 104).

Kingsland is now a modern residential suburb, but has the old associations of Shrewsbury Show (p. 94), and Thomas Day's connection with the Foundling Hospital (p. 270), which now forms part of the extensive buildings belonging to Shrewsbury School (p. 153). The suburb

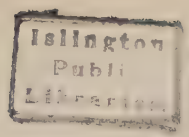
of the Abbey Foregate is full of historical interest. On passing over the English Bridge, the Abbey Church stands immediately in front (p. 71), while on the other side of the street are the only remnants of the domestic buildings, including the Pulpit of the Refectory (p. 75). A little way farther up the Abbey Foregate, Monkmoor Street leads to the Whitehall (p. 249), while the main road leads to Lord Hill's Column (p. 279), and a little farther on to St. Giles's Church (p. 81), in the churchyard of which repose the remains of the nonjuring Bishop Cartwright (p. 201). From this point a run of about two miles lands the traveller at Atcham, associated with Ordericus Vitalis (p. 25), and about two miles farther still is the village of Wroxeter, and the Roman city of Uriconium (p. 5).

Islington Public Libraries.



1 The Castle	7 Guild Hall	13 St Chad's Church
2 Council House	8 Market Hall	14 Tower on Walls (new)
3 St Mary's Church	9 St Julian's Friars	15 Station
4 Infirmary	10 Roman Catholic Cath.	16 Abbey Church
5 St Alkmund's Church	11 Old St Chad's.	17 Grammar School.
6 St Julian's Church	12 Music Hall	18 Free Library
		19 The Quatry
		20 Refectory Pulpit

Plan of SHREWSBURY



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